

THE AMERICAN DRAMA
No. I.

THE
SPANISH WIFE.

A Play,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY
SAMUEL M. SMUCKER.
(OF THE NEW YORK BAR.)

WITH A MEMOIR AND PORTRAIT
OF
EDWIN FORREST, Esq.

NEW-YORK:
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PROSPECTUS

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A Series of Plays by American Authors.

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Brady Dag.

W.L. Ormsby Sc.

Edwin Forrest

Modern Standard Dramas

ERRATA.

- 33, 17th line from bottom, for most read *much*.
 53. 6th " " " after but insert *I*.
 55, 6th " " " for there read *fair*.
 56, 1st & 8th " " for convert read *convent*.
 58, 5th line from top, for house read *home*.
 67, 18th " " " for th' read *thy*.
 78, 13th " " " for well read *will*.
 82, 8th " " " for Lorenzo read *Alfonso*.
 94, 5th " " " for you read *your*.

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7
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MEMOIR
OF
EDWIN FORREST ESQ.

WRITTEN FOR NO. I. OF "THE AMERICAN DRAMA."*

BY SAMUEL M. SMUCKER.

SEVERAL generations had passed away after the first settlement of America, before a Theatre existed on the new continent. It was as late as 1752 that, at Williamsburg, Va., the Drama obtained a feeble birth in the land of Columbus. The first *American* play ever performed upon our shores was a Comedy, styled "*The Contrast*," which was produced in April, 1786, at the "Board Alley Theatre," in New York. From that period until the present, the

* The publishers of "The American Drama," deeming that a Memoir of EDWIN FORREST would be an appropriate introduction to such a work, invited the present writer to prepare it. Though a stranger, personally, to the distinguished Tragedian, yet he undertook the task, relying upon the materials to be obtained from various published sources, and such other assistance as might be derived from gentlemen who were more intimately acquainted with the subject. He has, therefore, devoted his leisure to the work; has examined, with some minuteness, the public journals; and has also received very important and valuable assistance from several of Mr. Forrest's most intimate friends: so that we believe we may confidently assure the reader that all the leading and most interesting events of Mr. F.'s life and career, are here correctly and accurately stated, and may be implicitly relied upon as authentic. For the opinions expressed in this memoir of Mr. Forrest, as an artist and as a man, the writer is alone responsible. He has herein exercised the privilege of a freeman,—the same which is respectfully accorded to the reader.

accomplished votaries of Thesbis, have been gradually increasing in numbers and in ability ; while her gorgeous temples have arisen all over the land, glittering with splendor, and rivalling in magnificence the noblest theatrical structures of the old world. The amount and excellence of dramatic ability, in our land, have augmented in an equal proportion, until in this high and difficult walk of genius, America now proudly maintains her wonted excellence and dignity among the cultivated nations of the earth.

In the Drama, as in everything else, the “ manifest destiny ” of America seems to be upward to the highest Empyrean. It is not alone among her statesmen, her divines, her philosophers, her jurists, or her soldiers, that she now boasts her proudest names. In the more unusual and difficult departments of the Fine Arts, in painting, in sculpture, and in dramatic representation, America has already produced artists, whose excellence is acknowledged by all the world, unhesitatingly and freely. Among the time-hallowed productions of ancient sculpture, which are now treasured up at Rome, the achievements of the chisel of a Powers, are admired with equal rapture. In the company of the great masters of painting in Europe, a West hides no diminished head. And thus too, beside the colossal names of Garrick, Kemble, and Kean, our youthful Republic proudly places that of her FORREST, and boldly challenges for him a niche in the temple of histrionic fame, not lower or less distinguished. This claim is not one urged and forced upon the reluctant acquiescence of the world, by national partiality or preference. It is one, based upon indisputable merit,—upon merit so clear, so obvious, and so supreme, that it finds a ready acknowledgment among all intelligent and cultivated people.

EDWIN FORREST was born at Philadelphia, March 9th, 1806. His father was a native of Scotland, and a man of sterling integrity. He was an importer of Scottish goods ; but becoming embarrassed in business, he obtained a situation in the U. S. Bank, in which he continued until its close. Afterward his friend, Stephen Girard, appreciating his personal merit, invited him to a place in the Girard Bank, which position he retained until his death.

The father of the great Tragedian first intended him for the church. He and his wife were devout persons, and their son frequently accompanied them to their religious services. On their

return, he occasionally edified, or amused his seniors by declaiming accurately from memory, long passages from the sermon they had just heard, precisely in the tone and manner of the clergyman.—This happy pulpit aptitude in their son, confirmed his parents in their pious purpose; but the early death of his father, who left a large family in dependant circumstances, put an end at once, and apparently forever, to his prospects of advancement in any of the liberal professions. His father died deeply in debt. These obligations, his son, in after years, when fortune had smiled upon him, entirely liquidated, with the proud feeling, that no one might say, his father owed aught to any man.

The distinguished ornithologist, *Wilson*, was among the first to discover the remarkable talents of young Forrest for recitation. He selected appropriate passages for that purpose; and as he was in the constant habit of visiting his father's family, he would on those occasions, listen to his recitations, and then reward him for their excellence, by presenting him with the plates of his great work, then passing through the press.

Immediately after his father's death, young Forrest was placed in a ship chandler's shop in Philadelphia. His attendance at the elementary school, to which he had belonged, was thus at once suspended, and an end put not only to his literary advantages, but also apparently to all ambitious hopes. About this period a strolling company of Thesbians opened an amateur theatre in Front-st., Philadelphia. The admission to the performances was *gratis*. The terms admirably suited the finances of young Forrest, who soon found himself, for the first time, within the precincts of a theatre. Here a new and sudden impulse was given to his thoughts and aspirations. He there first conceived the idea of becoming an actor. Fortunately nature had imbedded in his soul a precious gem of the purest and brightest water, which required only to be placed beneath the rays of a theatrical sun in order to send forth scintillations of unequalled brilliancy and splendor; a gem which was destined, in future years, to shed transcendant lustre on the American Stage.

It was not long before young Forrest enrolled himself among this very troupe of youthful *Roscii*, and gave first vent to the growing impulses of his soul, for something nobler and better than

the drudgery of a ship chandler's shop. His "first appearance on any stage" was under very remarkable circumstances; under circumstances which may even be termed *peculiar*. The part assigned him in this first cast, was that of a female! It was *Rosalia*, in "*Rudolph, or the Robbers of Calabria*." His own wardrobe furnished nothing appropriate to the part, and he was compelled to plunder that of his sister. Unhappily, the dress in question was too short for him, and the absurdity of his appearance on the stage may be readily imagined. The laughter of the audience compelled him immediately to retreat. It was thought that the unfortunate debutant had hid himself away in concealed mortification. The fact, however, was very different. As soon as the play was over, before the audience had deserted the theatre, he himself rang the bell—up went the curtain—and young Forrest rushed upon the stage, his dress bedaubed and striped with paint, so as to represent a harlequin, and he declaimed Goldsmith's Epilogue with such extraordinary appropriateness and effect, that he was greeted with the most rapturous applause. His first appearance thus eventuated in a signal triumph, and confirmed his predilection for the histrionic art. He retired that night, from his first performance, the proud hero of the hour and of the occasion.

His next performance was achieved under more dignified circumstances. The interval of time he had improved by laborious study. Nature was his great teacher; for he had none beside to guide him. She had bestowed upon him, however, a vigorous constitution, a sweet and sonorous voice, and a powerful mind.—These advantages he carefully improved by self-culture, and was able, on the next occasion which offered, to undertake a much more elaborate task.

Shortly after the preceding adventure, he was introduced by Col. Swift to the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, where he played in the characters of *Young Norval*, and *Octavian*, Zaphora in *Mahomet*, and *Frederic* in "*Lover's Vows*." In each of these performances he was regarded as a youthful prodigy, and his efforts were hailed with great applause. At this period, it may be said, that his intention to become an actor was irrevocably fixed.

In Sept., 1822, Messrs. Jones & Collins, who had just established Theatres at Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Lexington, arrived in

Philadelphia for the purpose of engaging actors for their western theatres. Mr. Forrest justly thought, that travel combined with study, would greatly improve him. He presented himself for a situation in the new company. He informed the managers frankly of his plans and wishes, gave them his reference, and stated his terms. He was desired to call the next day. As soon as he had left, Mr. Jones remarked that there was something about the manners of young Forrest, so independent, so dignified, and yet withal so decorous, that he should be instantly engaged, and without even conferring with the persons to whom he had referred. He was accordingly engaged by them, at a small salary. This was his first engagement as a regular actor. His first manager was never forgotten ;—in Forrest's house, when in the zenith of wealth and fame, Jones found a home, and there he died. In health he was cherished, and in sickness he was nursed, with all the tenderness due to a father, and an esteemed benefactor.

In pursuance of this, his first engagement, Mr. Forrest traveled westward. The company to which he belonged played three months at Pittsburg on their route. There he performed in Tragedy, Comedy, Farce and Ballet. His exertions in that city were rewarded with increasing applause. He then proceeded to Cincinnati, thence to Lexington ; and after leaving his first manager, he was engaged by Caldwell, to play at his theatre in New Orleans. It need scarcely be said, that during this time his talents and his industry combined, enabled him to rise higher and higher in professional excellence. It was at New Orleans that his growing merit made him a universal favorite. After some time he was engaged by Gilfert, then manager of the Charlestown and Albany Theatres, to perform in these several cities. It was here that he was first thrown, professionally, in contact with the illustrious actor, Edmund Kean, and was cast as second to that "Star" in all his great parts. It is asserted, on good authority, that Mr. Kean frequently remarked, that during his travels through this country, he had met but *one* young man who promised to become, in future time, a great actor ; and that young man was Edwin Forrest.

It was during the first visit of Mr. Forrest to the West, that he endured all the wants and vicissitudes incident to the career of the poor but aspiring actor. Though often reduced to poverty,

it is narrated of him that he never run in debt. Yet it might be said of him :

“ Want, worldly want, that hungry, meagre fiend,
Was at his heels, and chased him full in view.”

In illustration of this remark, it may be well to record an anecdote which appertains to his Western experiences at this early period of his career. At one time he was so pressed by actual hunger, that he plucked and eat the raw corn of a wealthy Kentucky gentleman, who would doubtless have severely punished his freedom had he detected him in this innocent, because necessary, depredation. That same gentleman—when years had rolled away, and Mr. Forrest returned to the West again, an illustrious tragedian, with a world-wide reputation, honored and courted by all—that same gentleman then gave him a magnificent dinner, to which he invited, and obtained the presence of the most distinguished persons in the land.

Under Gilfert, he played the leading business, except when “stars” appeared. With a quick and discriminating eye, Gilfert detected and appreciated the great value of Forrest; but for his own profit wisely kept his own counsel. About this time the New York, now the Bowery Theatre, was projected; Gilfert was to become the manager, and his best card was Forrest. Gilfert knew well, that no stock actor in a minor theatre, however great a favorite he might become, could ever rise to fame without a metropolitan reputation. He possessed the native gold which only wanted the stamp of such an approval to make it current over the whole country.

In July, 1826, in the interval between the closing of the Albany and the opening of the Bowery Theatre, Mr. Forrest appeared for the first time in New York, at the Park Theatre, for the benefit of Mr. Woodhull, a favorite stock actor of the day. The play selected was Othello. He came unheralded and unknown, and though the audience were delighted with the performance, yet it made no visible impression on the public.

On Oct. 23, 1826, the Bowery Theatre opened, under the management of Gilfert. On the first Monday of Nov. following, Mr. Forrest made his first appearance there in Othello. In the first

act he is described as having been excessively nervous. In the second act that defect was less obvious, and his self-command more apparent. In the succeeding acts, so marked, so original and so powerful was his execution of this difficult part, that the audience were most enthusiastic in their applause. His fame and success in New York were at once established.

A distinguished literary gentleman, himself, at that time, editor of one of the leading journals of the day, and who was present on this occasion, informs us that the indications of high ability then displayed by Mr. Forrest were unmistakable. That he committed errors, even gross errors, could not be denied; but that even his errors were so peculiar and so original that they convinced every intelligent beholder that no ordinary man could have committed them; in truth, that none but a most extraordinary man could or would have ventured them.

It was during this engagement that an incident occurred, which served to illustrate the personal character of the man. In consequence of the rapid growth of his fame, and the crowded audiences that nightly attended to witness his performances, a rival manager approached Mr. F. with more advantageous offers. Mr. F. replied that he had engaged with Mr. Gilfert for the season, and could not listen to his proposition. The manager replied, that as there was no written contract, he was not bound. "Sir," answered Mr. Forrest, "my word is as strong as any written contract!" It should be added, in justification of the manager's proposition, as well as to illustrate the great strength of Mr. F.'s sense of honor, that the former had heard the latter complain, that he had been cast in parts which he could not be justly called on to perform.

Such was his popularity during this engagement, that he drew immense audiences; and Gilfert actually *lent* him during this his first season, on frequent occasions, to other theatres, both in New York and Boston, at two hundred dollars per night; he still paying Mr. F. twenty-eight dollars per week! This sort of speculation becoming known, and severely animadverted upon, the manager *generously* increased his salary to fifty dollars per week! His professional position at that time, may be inferred from the remark made by the Boston Traveller, in reference to his per-

formances in that city : "*Mr. Forrest certainly improved on McCready.*"

When this engagement closed, in the summer of 1827, Gilfert said to Forrest : "I shall want you for the next season; but I suppose our terms must be a little different." "Yes, sir." "What do you expect?" "I expect nothing, sir; you have yourself fixed my value. You have found me to be worth \$200 per night!" Gilfert, who had engaged him the first season for \$28 per week, found it his interest to pay him for the season \$200 per night, and engaged him for eighty nights. His receipts this season at the Bowery alone amounted \$8,800. Thus, in one short year, the young artist who came to New York unheralded, unknown, and poor, by the irresistible force of his genius, had risen to high fame, wealth, and distinction. We believe that no parallel to success as sudden and great as this can be produced in the history of the American or any other Stage.

After this period Mr. Forrest performed engagements in various cities throughout the Union. He was everywhere eagerly sought for; everywhere highly appreciated and applauded. He returned the following season to New York, and commenced a third engagement at the Bowery. Arriving at New York, he met a valued friend in the lobby of that theatre, upon whom he suddenly opened with the following startling declaration :—" *Thank heaven, I am not worth a ducat.*" His friend eagerly inquired the meaning of an assertion so singular and so ambiguous; for he knew Mr. F. had netted a large amount of money by his preceding engagements. Said Mr. F. : "My mother and sisters were poor, and I have just purchased for them a house in Philadelphia; and all the balance of my funds I have invested there for their support. Thank heaven, I am not worth a ducat." And well might the noble, aspiring, and triumphant adventurer, whose honorable ambition had been already rewarded as it merited,—"*thank heaven*" that he had been enabled to obtain the means of benefaction; and that he possessed the exalted magnanimity to apply them in a way so pleasing and grateful to the noblest instincts of humanity.

About 1830, his next offer of engagement in New York, was at the Park. The manager proposed to give him one-half of the house, after expenses were paid, and a free benefit. During this

engagement, the Park Theatre held more money than it ever did before or since. During the two weeks of its continuance, Mr. F. received \$5,500 independently of his benefit ;—a sum unequalled either by Kean, Cooke, or any of the great dramatic meteors of the age, who have successively glittered upon the boards of that theatre.

In 1834, Mr. Forrest determined to visit Europe. He did not go abroad for the purpose of making a professional tour. He went simply as a private gentleman, to enjoy the usual advantages of foreign travel ; to visit the celebrated cities and the historical localities of the old world ; and thus to enlarge his fund of general knowledge and information. He wished, by the careful study of the celebrated works of art, which the treasures of Europe alone possessed, to improve himself in

The younger of the sister arts,
Where all their beauties blend.

He addressed the audience at the Park Theatre immediately before he sailed. He then declared that he was not going to Europe professionally ; that the applause of his own countrymen was sufficient for him ; that it ought to be enough for any man ; and that as for himself he desired nothing higher or better. Some of the most distinguished of his fellow-citizens honored him with a public dinner immediately previous to his departure, on July 25, 1834, at which Chancellor McCoun presided. On this occasion, which was graced with the presence of the first citizens of the land, Mr. F. was presented with a gold medal, as a tribute of their admiration. On the obverse was a bust of Mr. Forrest in profile, surrounded by the words, *Histrioni Optimo, Edwino Forrest, Viro Praestanti* ; and on the reverse, a figure of the Genius of Tragedy, with the following appropriate quotation from the great bard of Avon :
“ *Great in mouths of wisest censure.*”

With these honorable indications of the respect and admiration of his countrymen, Mr. Forrest sailed for Europe. He was absent nearly two years. He traveled over the length and breadth of the continent ;—from Edinburg to Rome, from St. Petersburg to Odessa. He saw and contemplated with the mature observation of enlightened and cultivated minds, all that was interesting, in-

structive, and memorable in the renowned scenes and associations of the old world.

In the Fall of 1836 he returned to his own country, though only for a short time. He had crossed the ocean waste merely to fulfil the promise he had made previous to his departure for Europe to play at the Bowery. He soon returned again to England. During his first visit, he had made the acquaintance of a lady, whose name has since become so widely associated with his own. To her he was married in June, 1837.

During his second visit to England, which continued throughout one year, Mr. Forrest filled various engagements in the different leading theatres of the United Kingdom. He was everywhere received with the greatest applause. He rose at once to the highest pinnacle of professional fame, in the very home and favorite haunts of Garrick, Kemble, Kean, Cooke, and others. Scarcely one dissenting voice among all the intelligent critics of that land, jarred discordantly upon the universal and harmonious chorus of praise which greeted his performances. It was acknowledged by the English press, and by the English public, that their greatest bard had at length received from America, an illustrator of his genius, as accomplished and as consummate as any ever produced among their own gifted countrymen.

Thus loaded with the highest professional honors from the old world, he returned to his own country; and was immediately greeted, on his arrival, with a splendid banquet, which was offered him by many of the most distinguished of his fellow-citizens at Philadelphia.

This appears to be a proper place to notice the peculiarity of Mr. Forrest's professional career, which is worthy of special attention.

At the early period of that career, he was impressed with the importance of fostering as much as was in his power, the growth of dramatic genius among his countrymen. He carried his nationality of feeling even further. He determined to offer a premium for the best American play, whose subject should be the American Indian. The result of this offer was the production of *Metamora*, by John A. Stone. The merits of this play, through the vivid and powerful representation of it by Mr. Forrest, have become familiar

to the world. Indeed, so remarkable and so extraordinary is this part, in the hands of Mr. F., that we may safely predict that as the great original of *Metamora*, expired with King Philip, without his transmitting to any of his successors, either the grandeur or the sublimity of his nature ; so his imposing scenic existence will also perish with the mighty actor who personates him so admirably on the mimic stage.*

* "*METAMORA*" was the first of Mr. Forrest's prize plays. It was selected from among fourteen dramatic productions, by a committee, consisting of the following gentlemen, who were selected by Mr. F. for that purpose :—W. C. Bryant, Fitz Green Halleck, James Lawson, P. M. Wetmore, J. G. Brooks, and William Leggett. As no portion of this celebrated play, or of its appendages, has ever appeared in print, the reader will doubtless be interested by the perusal of the Prologue and Epilogue, the former from the pen of P. M. Wetmore, the latter from that of James Lawson, Esq.

PROLOGUE TO METAMORA.

Not from the records of Imperial Rome,
Or classic Greece, the muses' chosen home,
From no rich legends of the olden day,
Our bard hath drawn the story of his play.
Led by the guiding hand of genius on,
He here hath painted nature on her throne ;
His eye hath pierced the forest's shadowy gloom,
And read strange lessons from a nation's tomb :
Brief are the annals of that blighted race—
These halls usurp a monarch's resting place !
Tradition's mist-enshrouded page alone
Tells that an empire was—we know 'tis gone !

From foreign climes full oft the muse hath brought
Her glorious treasures of gigantic thought ;
And here beneath the witchery of her power,
The eye hath poured its tributary shower.
When modern pens have sought the historic page
To picture forth the deeds of former age,
O'er soft Virginia's sorrows ye have sighed,
And dropt a tear when spotless beauty died.

In pursuance of his purpose to foster native genius, Mr. Forrest has offered premiums, at different times, for American plays ; and

When Brutus cast his cloud aside to stand
 The guardian of the tyrant-trampled land ;
 When patriot Tell, his soil from thralldom freed,
 And bade the avenging arrow do its deed,
 Your bosoms answered with responsive swell,
 For freedom triumphed as the oppressor fell !

These were the melodies of humbler lyres,
 The lights of genius, yet withered his fires ;
 But when the master-spirit struck the chords,
 And inspiration breathed her burning words.,
 When passion's self-stalked living o'er the stage,
 'To melt with love, or rouse the soul to rage,
 When Shakspeare led his bright creations forth,
 Waked the pale dead, or gave new beings birth—
 Breathless, entranced, ye heard the spell-fraught line
 And felt the minstrel's power—almost divine !
 While thus your plaudits cheer the stranger lay,
 Shall native bards in vain the field essay ?
 To-night we test the strength of native powers,
 Subject, and bard, and actor, all are ours.
 'Tis yours to judge if worthy of a name,
 And bid them live within the halls of fame !

EPILOGUE TO METAMORA.

Before the bar of beauty, taste, and wit,
 This host of critics too, who throng the pit,
 A trembling bard, has been this night arraigned,
 And I am counsel in the cause retained.
 Here come I, then, to plead with guileless art,
 And speak less to the law, than to the heart.
 A native bard, a native actor too,
 Have drawn a native picture to your view ;
 In fancy that, bade Indian wrongs revive,
 While this, embodied all as if alive.
 Rich plants are they of our own favored land,
 Your smiles, the sun, 'neath which their leaves expand.

the result has been, that he has evoked into existence some dramatic productions which do honor to the literature of the country.—These plays are *Pelopidas*, *The Gladiator*, and the *Broker of Bogota*, by Dr. Bird; *Caius Marius*, by R. Penn Smith; *Jack Cade*, by R. F. Conrad, and *Mahomet*, by Mr. Miles. We doubt whether a similar array of dramatic productions can be pointed at which owed their existence to the liberality and nationality of feeling, of any other actor, either in England or America.

In accordance with his purpose of building up an American

Yet not that they are native do I plead,
 'Tis for their worth alone, I ask your mead.
 How shall I ask ye ? Singly ? Then, I will ;
 But if I fail ? Fail ! Let me try my skill.
 Sir, I know you ; I've often seen your face,
 And always seated in that selfsame place ;
 Now in your ear :—What think ye of the play ?
 " It hath some merit truly"—*did* you say ?
 " The tawny chief upborne on eagle wing,
 The Indian *forest* scoured, like Indian king."
 See yon fair maid, the tear still dims her eye—
 And hearken, hear ye not her gentle sigh ?
 Ah ! these speak more than language can relate,
 The woe-fraught heart o'er Nameoke's fate :
 She tries us not by rigid rules of art,
 Her proof is feeling, and her judge, the heart.
 What dost thou say, thou bushy-whiskered bean ?
 He nods approval ;—whiskers are the go !
 Who's he that sits the fourth bench from the stage
 There, in the pit ; why, he looks wondrous sage.
 He seems displeased, his lip denotes a sneer,
 Oh ! he's a critic, who looks so severe.
 Why, in his face I see the attic salt—
 A critic's merit is, to find a fault.
 What fault find you, sir ? Eh ? Or you, sir ? None !
 Then if the critic's mute, my cause is won.
 Yea by this burst of loud heart-felt applause,
 I know that I have gained my client's cause.
 Thanks that our great demerits you forgive,
 And bid our bard and *Metamora* live.

Drama, Mr. Forrest publicly offered, last of all, a premium of three thousand dollars for a play written by an American citizen, which would be well adapted to representation; and promising one thousand dollars for that play among the number, (provided none realized his *first* intention,) which should possess the highest literary merit. In answer to this invitation, Mr F. received upward of seventy plays! Each one of these he carefully read.—None of them answered his original design. He however awarded to Mr. G. H. Miles \$1,000 for his play of Mahomet, already mentioned; deeming it to be the best literary production in the collection.* The reader will not be surprised at the above statement if he is at all conversant with the nature of the subject. The production of a *successful* play, not only requires ample leisure and freedom from all care in reference to subsistence, during the process of composition; but also a more rare and difficult combination of intellectual qualities than belong to most other species of composition. First, there must be genius—the poet's heaven-born fire; the grace and beauty of dramatic versification; a familiarity with classical, historical, and mythological learning; the well-trained powers of the practiced thinker and writer; and a deep insight into the hidden springs of human action, feeling and passion; while other attainments less lofty or imposing are equally indispensable—a knowledge of stage effect; a constructive ability whereby to avoid impossible or absurd situations, which would violate the known relations of time and space; the resources of inventive genius, which furnish constant novelties and striking surprises on the stage; and an ability to intersperse the grave and gay, the solemn, the ludicrous, the pathetic, and the sublime, in judicious variety. To possess all these qualifications, falls only to the lot of the highest, and therefore the rarest, dramatic genius.

If these and many other qualities are essential to the successful dramatist, need we wonder that so few succeed? Need we be surprised that Mr. Forrest sought, in vain, among the seventy original plays before him, for one in which he felt he could do himself, or his design justice?

* Mr. W. Gilmore Simms has lately rewritten Shakspeare's Timon, for Mr. F., which, we are informed on good authority, will be produced by him in New York, during the coming Spring, 1854.

During Mr. Forrest's first season, after his return from England, of one hundred nights, his receipts were \$33,500. His receipts from his engagements during the second season were \$33,700.

During the course of his public career, Mr. Forrest has been invited, on several occasions, to become a candidate for political honors, and for a seat in Congress; and that too under such circumstances, as rendered his success not in the least degree problematical. These honorable proposals, Mr. Forrest has invariably declined, preferring to be known in no other public capacity or position than that which was strictly professional. But we know of no other member of his profession, however distinguished, to whom similar offers of political promotion have ever been made.

In the year 1838, Mr. Forrest was invited by the "Democratic Republican Committee," of New York, to deliver an oration at the "Democratic Republican Celebration," of the sixty-second anniversary of the independence of our country. He complied with this invitation, and delivered on July 4th an oration, remarkable for the purity of its diction, the originality and excellence of its sentiments, and the patriotic tone which pervades it. No one can peruse this oration without being impressed with the conviction that it is the production of the mind of a statesman; and that if its author had not devoted himself to the stage, his "natural gifts" would have enabled him to become illustrious in the Senate Chamber. The complexion of Mr. F.'s political opinions may be inferred from the following extract from this oration:

"To Jefferson belongs, exclusively and forever, the high renown of having framed the glorious charter of American liberty. To his memory the benedictions of this and all succeeding times are due for reducing the theory of freedom to its simplest elements, and in a few lucid and unanswerable propositions, establishing a groundwork on which men may securely raise a lasting superstructure of national greatness and prosperity. But our fathers, in the august assemblage of '76, were prompt to acknowledge and adopt the solemn and momentous principles he asserted. With scarce an alteration—with none that affected the spirit and character of the instrument, and with but few that changed in the slightest degree its verbal construction—they published that exposition

of human rights to the world, as their Declaration of American Independence; pledging to each other their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, in support of the tenets it proclaimed.— This was the grandest, the most important experiment ever undertaken in the history of man. But they that entered upon it were not afraid of new experiments, if founded on the immutable principles of right, and approved by the sober convictions of reason.— There were not wanting then, indeed, as there are not wanting now, pale counsellors to fear, who would have withheld them from the course they were pursuing, because it tended in a direction hitherto untrod. But they were not to be deterred by the shadowy doubts and timid suggestions of craven spirits, content to be lashed forever round the same circle of miserable expedients, perpetually trying anew the exploded shifts which had always proved lamentably inadequate before. To such men, the very name of experiment is a sound of horror. It is a spell which conjures up gorgons, hydras, and chimeras dire. They seem to know that all that is valuable in life—that the acquisitions of learning, the discoveries of science, and the refinements of art—are the result of experiment. It was experiment that bestowed on Cadmus those keys of knowledge with which we unlock the treasure-houses of immortal mind. It was experiment that taught Bacon the futility of the Grecian philosophy, and led him to that heaven-scaling method of investigation and analysis, on which science has safely climbed to the proud eminence where now she sits, dispensing her blessings on mankind. It was experiment that lifted Newton above the clouds and darkness of this visible diurnal sphere, enabling him to explode the sublime mechanism of the stars, and weigh the planets in their eternal rounds. It was experiment that nerved the hand of Franklin to snatch the thunder from the armory of heaven. It was experiment that gave this hemisphere to the world. *It was experiment that gave this continent freedom.*”

We have now arrived at the period of Mr. McCready's second visit to the United States. On his arrival, Mr. Forrest waited on him; invited him to his house; and extended to him the most liberal hospitality. He neglected nothing to render the visit of the English tragedian agreeable, so far as lay in his power. In every

way he sought to advance Mr. McCready's fame and interest.—How very cordial Mr. Forrest's treatment of the latter gentleman was; and how highly his kindness and courtesy were then appreciated, may be inferred from the following brief extract from a letter from Mrs. Catherine Francis McCready to Mr. Forrest, dated London, Nov. 3, 1844, immediately after her husband's return to England:

"Nothing has given me greater pleasure from America than that which the relation of the hospitality and kindness Mr. McCready has received from you, during his sojourn in New York, has communicated. I only wish I had any means here of testifying my gratitude to you, for your great attention to him; which has gratified him very much, and which is one of the delightful things among the many, he will have to reflect upon, in remembering his visit to your great country."

In 1845 Mr. Forrest made his second professional tour to England. He of course naturally expected that Mr. McCready would return, at least to some extent, the courtesies he had been willing to receive from him in this country. Unhappily a very different feeling was at once manifest, on the part of that gentleman. Not the least mark of respect or civility did Mr. F. receive from his late friend and guest. Suddenly a mysterious opposition burst forth in the public prints against Mr. Forrest's performances. It was found that this opposition, at first, was confined to those papers which were connected with Mr. McCready. The "*Examiner*" was especially bitter against Mr. Forrest; yet it was edited by John Forster, a particular and confessed friend of Mr. McCready, and one ever willing to obey his commands. Is it not a fair inference that if the feelings of Mr. McCready toward Mr. F. were those of ordinary courtesy, to say nothing of consistent friendship, he would have forbidden his *literary* friend to belabor and abuse, in the most brutal manner, his *professional* brother? Yet instead of doing this, increasing rancor was exhibited by that journal during the whole of this visit of Mr. F. to England. And being thus led on, many other members of the English press followed in the ignoble race in accordance with the old maxim:—*Latrante uno, latrat statim et alter canis.**

* One dog barking, another immediately joins him.

That paper did not rely on facts alone for its defamation, but with a laudable zeal to serve its friend and master, invented new readings for Mr. F.; and even went so far as to condemn him for his manner of delivering certain passages which were not to be found in the parts which he performed, and which, consequently, he never uttered! Thus Mr. Forrest soon had nearly the whole pack of the English press at his heels, with the exception of some few really independent journals. We may illustrate the just spirit and the literary sagacity of the latter, by quoting a single remark of one of them:—

“It is refreshing now-a-days to see one of Shakspeare’s plays (*Lear*), so brought before us; and we feel exceedingly obliged to Mr. Forrest for having reminded us of the palmy days of Kemble and Kean; and when we add, that his *Lear* is equal in every respect to that of the two mighty tragedians, whose names are hallowed by the admirers of genius, we think we can scarcely bestow higher praise.”*

During this visit Mr. F. unfortunately detected too many evidences of the professional jealousy which actuated his *cidevant* friend. He might have excused or disregarded the want of reciprocal courtesy. He could not but become deeply incensed at secret and groundless hostility. His own feelings became embittered, and he felt released from all further forbearance. In Edinburgh, McCready played Hamlet, and during the performance favored the audience with a “*pas de mouchoir*,” which so outraged Mr. Forrest’s sense of propriety, that he, happening to be present, expressed his repugnance by hissing. It was his *protest* against such outrageous desecration of the immortal bard.†

This one single sibilation (itself merely an authorized mode of expressing a professional judgment or opinion,) was the only, and quite excusable, retaliation inflicted by Mr. Forrest, in return for all the bitter hostility which he had suffered in England;—from Mr. McCready, solely because he was a hated rival;—and from the English press, solely because he was an American Artist!

On this side of the water, Mr. Forrest’s outrageous treatment was condemned by the universal censure of the community. The

* *Vide London Era*, March 9th, 1845.

† This fact Mr. F. himself avowed in the *London Times*

cause of it was too palpable to be unknown. Had he not been so loudly and generally applauded in England, during his previous visit, a doubt might have hovered over and obscured the motive, and therefore the injustice of the brawling flood of censure which now overwhelmed him. America had expected better things of England. She had not so treated and repulsed her Kean and her Kemble, when, with shattered fame and fortune, they had swarmed hither as to a land of golden promise and fruition. Even McCready himself had fared far otherwise.

Right on the heels of these events, and as if to provoke an offensive contrast, or a just retaliation, Mr. McCready in 1849, traveled back again to the United States. His first appearance, we believe, was at Boston. He there made an uncalled for attack on Mr. Forrest, in a speech which he delivered before the curtain, in allusions so plain that none could fail to understand their import. Previous to this he had made an engagement to open at the Broadway Theatre, in N. Y. He unscrupulously broke the engagement, fearing, as it was alleged, that *that* was Mr. Forrest's favorite domain, and he should labor under disadvantages there. He had also been informed that Mr. F. had just concluded a very brilliant engagement in that theatre, and to play the same round of characters so soon again, in the same place, would prove less attractive to the public. He then entered into an engagement with Mr. Hackett, to play at the Astor Place Opera House, in New York.

At Philadelphia, Mr. McCready, for the third time, made a very offensive and unprovoked allusion to Mr. Forrest, from before the curtain of the Arch-st. Theatre. Until this time the latter had said nothing—not a single word in public—in reference to these difficulties. He then published a card, briefly reviewing the merits of the case, and showing most conclusively, how offensive, injurious, and unjust, the whole career of Mr. McC. had been, in reference to himself; and that so far from using his influence to organize the same opposition against Mr. McC. here, which the latter had arrayed against him in England—he had expressly forbidden everything of the kind.

Our limits will prevent us from pursuing the details of this controversy any further. It is sufficient to say, that the difficulties increased; the feelings of the community unhappily became

intensely excited—too much indeed for the preservation of public peace, however great the individual injuries inflicted might have been. The whole contest ended disastrously and fatally in the memorable riot which occurred on the 10th of May, 1849, at the Astor Place Opera House, on the occasion of Mr. McCready's performance there.

He had appeared at that theatre a few evenings previous, on which occasion he had acted to dumb show and noise. A numerous audience had been aroused to retaliation by the unjust speeches which he had several times delivered against their distinguished and unoffending countryman. McCready thought he could never venture again before an American audience—but a card was got up, inviting him to play again, and offering him another hearing. This invitation brought him out once more.

Much feeling of a national character—between Englishmen and Americans—had now crept into the contest; and even much local social rancour between what were termed the "Silkstocking Gentry" and the "Bowery Boys." These were somewhat new issues in this contest; but they served powerfully to add intensity to the existing hostility, and to magnify its deplorable results. But whatever were the consequences of this private dispute, no one ever ventured to charge Mr. Forrest with having, in any way approved or excited the indignation of the public against Mr. McCready.—But so far as he could influence public events, he endeavored to dissuade from all acts of violence, how great soever the affronts he himself, and the nation, through him might have received.

And on the public trials which followed this unhappy night, not a voice testified one word to connect Mr. F. in any way with the results. His character was untouched, and to this the journals of the day bear ample testimony.

The next event which brought Mr. Forrest prominently before the public, was his divorce. The trial ended in January, 1852. For two years previous, he had not pursued his profession. His mind was distressed, and he confined himself to the society of his most intimate friends. In reference to his course in this matter, it may be truly said: "Naught he did in hate; but all in honor." It does not comport with the purpose of this memoir to enter into the details of this celebrated case. But it is a fact universally con-

ceded, that the verdict rendered in reference to it excited at once the astonishment and the surprise of the whole community.— Every one is familiar with the advantage which *a lady* invariably possesses before a jury, in cases of this description ; but we believe that rarely, in the whole career of justice, or rather of injustice, has an instance occurred in which the clearest force of evidence and the universal conclusion of intelligent and impartial minds, were so completely trampled under foot, as in this instance. And we may venture the assertion, that so settled has now become the public sentiment against the verdict which stands recorded in that case, that if it were again to be made the subject of investigation, even by a jury, the result would be precisely the reverse of that produced in the first instance. We herein state the unbiassed conclusion to which we have been brought respecting this *vexata quæstio* by a more thorough examination of facts than most persons have the opportunity of devoting to the subject.

On the 9th of February, Mr. Forrest appeared at the Broadway Theatre immediately after the verdict. Never had a public audience given such a reception to a public favorite. The applause was immense ; through the parquette and boxes were exhibited elegant banners, with expressive mottos, such as : “ This is the verdict of the People.” At the end of the performance Mr. F. was called before the curtain. The whole stage was immediately covered with wreaths and bouquets of various graceful devices. At length, when the applause had subsided, he spoke, and among other appropriate remarks, said : “ I thought my path was covered with thorns ; but I find you have strewed it with roses.” He received every possible evidence of the public sympathy and approbation.

This engagement was the longest as well as the most memorable ever recorded in the history of the stage. It continued till the 15th of April, being sixty-nine successive nights. The house—one of the largest and most magnificent in America—was crowded nightly to the utmost of its capacity, and with audiences whose enthusiasm remained unabated.

On the fiftieth night of this engagement, there was a jubilee. The theatre was illuminated in front ; an appropriate transparency was exhibited ; many persons in the neighborhood, sympathizing with

the general feeling, illuminated their dwellings. Inside there was one continued triumph for the great actor, while the street was crowded by admiring thousands who could not gain admittance.

After playing at Philadelphia and elsewhere, Mr. Forrest returned to New York, and commenced another engagement at the Broadway, on the 20th of Sept. following, where he played for thirty successive nights, in consequence of the previous arrangements of the manager. On the 21st of Feb., 1853, he began another engagement at this theatre, which lasted seventy-three nights, though with an interval, after the first five nights, of one week, which Mr. F. devoted to witnessing the inauguration of President Pierce. Thus from Nov., 1826, to Oct., 1853, during a period of twenty-seven years, he has pursued his professional career; and has successfully maintained his first and indisputable position as the greatest living high priest of Thesbis.

As the representative of Shakspeare, Mr. F. stands unrivalled in the poet's four greatest productions: Hamlet, Lear, Othello, and Macbeth. But his range of characters are very various, comprising whatever is really great, in the wide sphere of the tragedian. As Richard III., Brutus, and Anthony in "Julius Cæsar," Shylock, Iago, Damon, Richelieu, Virginius, Pizarro, Tell, Jaffier, Bertram, and in many other of the best plays in the language, he is unsurpassed.

It is scarcely necessary to dwell upon his qualities as an actor, for nearly all, whom such an exposition might interest, have seen and enjoyed his performances. Nature bestowed on him in perfection, every requisite mental and physical qualification. His figure is one of dignified and manly proportions. His eye is full of fire and expression. His voice is the most remarkable for compass, for melody, and for power, of any on the stage. This may be illustrated by reference to his nuciation of the most celebrated passages of Shakspeare. We may cite an example:

Duncan is in his grave:

After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst, nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
Can touch him further !*

* Macbeth, Act. III., Scene II.

Whoever has heard Mr. Forrest utter these lines, will never forget it, while memory remains the warder of his brain ! Mr. Forrest's style is his own. Like every other great original, he has countless imitators, of various grades of excellence, who have profited, in different degrees, by the careful study of their distinguished model.

Every lover of the Drama will hope that the day may be far distant when his professional displays will terminate; and the plaudits of his admiring countrymen ring upon his ears for the last time. Whenever that event occurs, and he ceases to be a hero of the actual present, his memory will become enshrined in the hearts of myriads, as being connected with the most inspiring and exalted moments of their lives ; and they will look back at this great star of scenic splendor, and recall with delight those varied and intense emotions, which, with magic power, he had often produced within them, when portraying so impressively, the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, the grandeurs and the vicissitudes of humanity.

Thus, by the mighty actor wrought
Illusion's perfect triumphs come ;
Verse ceases to be airy thought,
And sculpture to be dumb !

TO

MADAME JULIE DE MARGUERITTES.

Madame :—Not less as a tribute of admiration for one of the most successful Dramatists of this country, than as a token of personal friendship and esteem, I beg leave to dedicate to you the following play.

With sentiments of profound regard,

I remain your obd't. serv't.,

SAMUEL M. SMUCKER.

New-York, Nov. 2, 1853.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

James I., (King of England.)
Prince Charles, (his son.)
Duke of Buckingham, }
Sir William Sidney. } *English Courtiers.*
Lord Rochester. }
Sir Richard Graham. }
Lord Cecil. }
Don Alfonso, (Laura's father.)
Don Pedro, (Laura's brother.)
Don Lorenzo, } *Spanish Grandees.*
Marquis Toledo, }
Philip II. (King of Spain.)
Valesquez, (artist.)
Leon, (Servant of Alfonso.)
Courtiers and Officers.
A Page.
Donna Laura
Donna Teresa, (her mother.)
Donna Constanza.

STAGE MEMORANDA.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*;
S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; M. D. *Middle Door*;
C. E. *Centre Entrance.*

P R E F A C E .

THE following play is founded upon some incidents of the well-known visit of Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham to Madrid, in A. D. 1623, for the purpose of negotiating a matrimonial alliance between that Prince, the son of James I., the reigning sovereign of England, and the Infanta, daughter of Philip II. The young noblemen who accompanied the Duke to Madrid, on that occasion, were the flower and pride of the English nobility. They were selected by that haughty and splendid courtier, in consequence of their superior external qualities. All of them were remarkable for their personal beauty, their accomplishments, and their *air de cour*. Among even these, Sir William Sidney was unrivalled and supreme.

A very few of the incidents of this play may be found in the authentic or romantic records, of that singular expedition; though so many and such great additions have been interwoven into the plot, as to render it, in a great measure, entirely original and imaginative; and whether the work be worthy of the impartial critic's praise or blame, one thing is not disguised,—that the piece has been the fruit of considerable, though very agreeable, exertion. The *labor limæ* has been as laborious as were the original conception and execution. The author has introduced one slight anachronism in the play, though it does not affect the continuity of the plot, which may be regarded as excusable under the circumstances.—Reference is made to the song put in the mouth of Sir Sidney, in Third Act.

Of the personages referred to in the succeeding pages, the most important, in an historical point of view, and the only one whose personal career it may be interesting to recount, was the celebrated George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. He was the unworthy favorite of both James I. and Charles I. His chief claims to their admiration, and the principal merits which secured him their regard, were the unusual elegance of his manners, and the remarkable beauty of his person.

King James first elevated this man through all the gradations of the peerage, until he conferred upon him almost regal power. His licentious and unprincipled conduct, in his high station, soon rendered him odious to the whole nation. His dishonorable behaviour in Paris, whither he had been sent to celebrate the marriage of King Charles I. with the daughter of Louis XIII., so disgusted that monarch, that he afterward refused to receive Buckingham as the English Ambassador at his court. It was in revenge for this deserved repulse, that he incited the Protestants of Rochelle to an useless and disastrous war against that monarch. His own conduct during this conflict, disgraced both himself, his king, and the nation; so that immediately on his return, the Parliament solemnly petitioned the king to dismiss him from the court. The only reply which the king condescended to give them, was an angry order for their immediate dissolution. Shortly afterward, the handsome and aspiring Duke was placed in command of another army, intended for the assistance of the Protestants of Rochelle; but he was assassinated on the instant of his embarkation, by Felton, an inferior officer among his own troops. All Europe, excepting the king alone, exulted at this sudden and ignominious termination of his career.

The part assigned to him in this play, is in complete harmony with these details of his history.

The most obvious objection which could be urged against the plot of the following play, is that Prince Charles, after having been introduced somewhat prominently in the First Act, afterward almost disappears from the subsequent scenes. The answer to this objection is this: that as the Prince is only intended to be a secondary character, and is introduced merely so far, as he is necessary to prepare the way for others, when he is afterward dropped, as soon as the more important personages become seriously engaged in the incidents of the drama,—he is but treated with critical consistency and justice. To have given him any further prominence would have diverted the attention from the real heroes of the play, and would have weakened the effect intended to be produced by the events of their more important history.

The transactions connected with the personal history of Prince Charles while in Spain, were trivial and unimportant, to the last degree; and it would have been impossible to invest anything

which he there either said or did, with the least dramatic interest or historical consequence. What was wanting in connection with himself, was furnished, to some extent, by his subordinate associates,—the heroes of the following play. The adventures of these men, in Spain, were indeed, memorable and striking; and few events, in the whole history of courtiers, furnish more romantic and interesting incidents, than those of the accomplished, elegant, though most dissolute *suite* of Prince Charles in Spain.

New York, Nov., 1853.

S. M. S.

NOTES TO TEXT.

[1.] The subsequent experience of Charles I., after he had espoused the princess Henrietta of France, proved to be precisely such as that referred to in the text. The *suite* of the French princess who accompanied her to England, formed the hot-bed of endless jealousies, bickerings, and domestic factions, amid the eternal and treacherous janglings of which, the unhappy king enjoyed as little domestic felicity, as ever fell to the lot of a less illustrious husband. The desperate prince was compelled at last to dismiss and expel every person connected with his Queen, from his court and capital. Then, but not till then, did he enjoy a cessation of their endless disturbances.

[2.] Philip II. was the son of Charles V., Emperor of Germany, King of Spain and the Netherlands, and King of Austria. He was a man of remarkable haughtiness of temper; and the language ascribed to him in the text, may be regarded as neither inappropriate or overstrained, however absurd it is in reality. In this monarch Spanish pride reached an amazing and unparalleled intensity.

[3.] It is a matter familiar to the historical reader, that the ancient worshippers of the Assyrian deity, Molock, erected hollow iron altars to his worship; which were surmounted by huge statues of the god, made of the same material, with extended arms, in which naked infants were deposited. Large fires were then built within the altars, and the innocent sufferers roasted to death, in the embrace of the god, amid the noisy revelry of the surrounding multitude. *Vide CALMET'S ENCYC. sub voce, Molock.*

THE SPANISH WIFE.



ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Private Cabinet of JAMES I., in the Palace at Windsor. KING JAMES discovered standing at a writing table, covered with papers, scrolls, &c.*

K. James. (solus.) Already have the ripening merits of
my son,
The youthful heir to England's throne, secured
The praises of my subjects, and the admiration
Of all Europe. Their congratulations now flow
In upon me daily. But while my blooming hopes
All centre in him, their fulfillment hangs,
But by a single hair, o'er a profound and
Hazardous abyss. If he should perish,
Where is the succession? Where then would be
The noble house of Stuart, and its hereditary
Glories? Where the peace and concord of the realm?
Thus the most trivial accident, that
E'er befel a feeble mortal, might, in a
Single instant, change the fortunes of a world.
He must marry; and that, too, quickly. His
Youthful blood must flow in other veins,
And an increasing brood of fair descendants,
Must crowd around his feet. I may yet see

That happy hour, ere these decrepid limbs
Repose in kindred clay. The good work is begun.
My messenger to the King of Saxony, must
Soon return; and should that proposition fail,
I must devise some other, surer alliance.

Enter BUCKINGHAM *and* LORD CECIL, L.

Ah, welcome, my lords; my noble privy
Councillors are late to-day.

Buck. We crave your pardon.

K. James. What news have you
Received from the King of Saxony?

Cecil. None, my liege.

K. James. Those sleepy Germans are so
Slow in their diplomacy! My patience
Is exhausted by them.

Buck. A short delay will
Doubtless bring his answer.

Enter PAGE, *who hands letter to the* KING, L.

K. James. (reads.) 'Tis e'en as you
Predict. My royal brother, King of Saxony,
Informs me in this last epistle, that
His fair daughter, Ann, is now betrothed
To a Danish prince; and much regrets my kind
Proposal is beyond the power of his fulfillment.
'Tis unfortunate. What shall be done?

Cec. My liege, amid the
Brilliant catalogue of Christian princesses,
There can yet surely one be found, deserving
Of this high and great alliance.

K. James. Name me but one.

Buck. There is the French princess,
Henrietta, blooming with unequalled loveliness.

K. James. I will permit no Bourbon
Princess in my court. Her suite would be the
Cause of endless jealousies and broils. They
Would but act as spies upon my government
And kingdom. I should enjoy no peace, or comfort
More, with those eternal intriguers within

The precincts of my palace.

Cec. I confess, that

Those are grave objections to a French alliance.

Buck. We must inquire, then,

Elsewhere. I will confer at once with all the

Foreign ministers at our court; I will

Inform my liege of the result of my researches.

Depend upon me; I will yet succeed,

And find a princess worthy of your son.

K. James. Then haste you in the work.

There are most serious dangers in delay.

The whole succession of my throne, now

Centres in that boy, and we must, quickly, ere an

Accident prevents so great a purpose,

Provide for the continuance of our royal

House. So, commence your inquiries.

[*Exit, BUCK. and CECIL, L.*]

SCENE II.—*Another Apartment in the Palace of Windsor*
PRINCE CHARLES and BUCKINGHAM discovered.

Buck. I own 'tis true, my noble prince. The
News from Saxony is not propitious.

But that affects me little. There are other

Princesses, as charming as the heavy

Dame of Dresden, and I hope most more so.

Charles. I wish my father

Did not hasten on my nuptials thus.

I do not wish to wed. A thousand beauties

Daily sigh around me, all whose tender charms

Delight my soul, and surfeit me with love.

More than these I do not want.

Buck. But your noble father is most anxious

Respecting the succession. You must then

Marry and that quickly. I have lately seen

A Spanish gentleman, who speaks in the

Most glowing terms of the fair Infanta,

Daughter of the Spanish monarch. What think

You now of such a match?

Charles. The ardent dames of
Spain, are not without their charms,
As all the world can testify.

What does he say of her ?

Buck. She is, indeed, not the
Most beauteous of her sex. Yet she is pretty,
Tender, graceful ; and the vast dominions,
Which would become her dower, would add
Stupendous bulk to th' wealth and resources
Of our English realms.

Charles. How would she best
Be won ? The etiquette of the Spanish court
Is endless and interminable. Years would
Elapse before a proposition of alliance
Between our houses, would attain a final issue.

Buck. There is much truth in that remark.
We must devise some quicker method. (*pauses.*)
I have it ! Let us sail at once for Spain,
There woo the princess in your proper person.
Observe her charms yourself. If you desire it,
I warrant, she will most easily be won.
And if need be ; if you are trammelled by the
Endless meshes of their courtly forms,
Elope with her from Spain ! Yes, elope on board our ships.
We will assist you. 'Twill all be afterward
Arranged. What think you of the adventure ?

Charles. 'Tis a brilliant thought.
'Tis worthy of the noble Buckingham ! I am
Delighted with it. What a romantic
Novelty would it be ! All Europe would
Be filled with wonder and applause. Such
An event has never happened yet, in all
The history of European princes. Indeed,
I like it vastly ! Spain is the land of love.
I should delight to roam amid the cool
And leafy shades of Vallambrosa, with an
Andalusian maid upon my arm ; and
Gaze on the mosaic splendors of the
Alhambra, where Moorish genius still
Beams forth, immortal. Yes, I approve the
Proposition. I will go !

Buck. But your sire, his high consent
Is needful. You must, of course, obtain that *first*.

Charles. I'll see him instantly.
'Tis Spain, and its rare beauties, far more

Than the Infanta, and her dower, which
Speed me on so ardently. We will meet
Again after my private converse with my father.

Buck. I will expect you then.

SCENE III.—*Private Cabinet of KING JAMES, as in first scene. KING JAMES and PRINCE CHARLES discovered.*

Charles. My honored liege, I crave to know :—
Do your desire that I, your son and heir,
Should wed ?

K. James. That is the greatest hope and
Aim for which I live.

Charles. Then I am willing to
Obey you, as well as to assist your purpose.

K. James. But I am yet unable
To discover where to look for an appropriate
And a worthy alliance.

Charles. Then let me mention
To you, one that is most suitable.

K. James. Proceed. Whom
Would you recommend ?

Charles. The Duke of Buckingham
And I, have just conferred on this important
Theme. He has proposed the daughter of
The King of Spain, the Infanta.

K. James. It is a seemly alliance.
'Tis one whereby great benefit might be
Obtained for England, and her interests,
On the continent. Let me see. (*pauses.*)
Upon reflection, I approve the proposition.
I will dispatch at once a messenger to
Th' Spanish court, to open conferences
On the subject.

Charles. Send a messenger ! Never ! sire.
I have still something better to propose.
I will go forth myself to Spain, and woo the
Princess there in person.

K. James. Impossible ! What an
Outrageous purpose ! What ! Shall I thus risk the lone
Successor to my throne, amid the countless
Perils, both of land and sea ; and that too, in a

Foreign clime? Never! Perchance, when the Perfidious Spaniard had you in his grasp, he might Retain you as a hostage, and extort from me most Ruinous terms of restitution.

Charles. But, my lord Buckingham Both proposes and approves this visit.

K. James. He does? That alters, Then, the case. What the noble Duke proposes, Must be right and safe. He is a far-sighted Statesman. Does he indeed regard this Proposition as both wise and prudent?

Charles. Perfectly. If you Confer with him, you will find it so.

K. James. I do not doubt your truth. I will at once consent. You shall go. With the Duke as your companion, and Protector, my fears will be allayed. But let me caution you, in time, against The many perils which will there surround you. Know, my son, the secret dagger of the Assassin, in that land, is ever on the Alert, to deal a deadly blow, when lust, Or avarice, or revenge would spur it on. Treat the Spanish court with deference, And to the princess give due courtesy. And do not be misled, e'en by the gallant Courtiers, whom I will send with you,— By Buckingham, and the impetuous Sydney. In all affairs of love, I grieve to say, They are unthinking and unscrupulous; And trifle but too lightly with the female Heart and its most pure affections. Be you honorable, prudent, faithful. Profess nothing which you do not feel Promise nothing which you will not Execute. And should you wish, at length, To wed the Spanish princess, my consent Shall not be wanting. Meanwhile, I will Command all needful preparations to be made For this strange expedition,—such as Will be worthy of yourself and me.

Charles. My liege and father,

Accept my hearty thanks. I will most deeply
Charge my mind and memory with your
Prudent counsils ; and will then obey them.
Amid the various scenes and incidents
Of this adventurous journey, I will
Ne'er forget the thoughtful lessons you this
Day impart to me.

SCENE IV.—*Palace of DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM, London.*

Enter BUCKINGHAM, SIR WILLIAM SYDNEY, LORD ROCHESTER, GRAHAM, and CECIL, L.

Buck. My noble lords, I have this moment
Come from the presence of the king, and my
Dispatches are in my possession.
All other needful preparations for this
Romantic embassy to Spain, are finished.
Our gallant ships already ride at
Anchor in the channel. Our youthful and
Adventurous prince is eager to embrace
His blooming Spanish bride. He bids us
Hasten our departure. What say you ?

Syd. I see no reason for delay.
All our equipments are complete ; and all
The splendor, which British pride, and
Wealth, and skill, could lavish on our embassy,
Have been bestowed upon us, by our
Liberal sovereign. I burn to see
The sunny hills of Spain ; to view the
Splendors of its haughty court ; and more than
All, to woo the dark-eyed beauties of
That loving clime, whose charms have
Been renowned throughout the world.

Roch. My chief objection to this
Sudden haste, will be, that so many soft
Attachments bind me here already, that, to
Dissolve them rudely all at once, will be
A desperate attempt ! A great many
Loving and devoted hearts, will surely break,
If you insist upon my leaving England,
In such eager haste !

Grah. I give my voice
In favor of our quick departure.
I am in haste to grasp those broad and glittering
Ducats, which now shine so brightly, in the
Iron coffers of the Spanish courtiers.
The members of this royal embassy will be
O'erwhelmed with floods of golden treasure,
If they accomplish this desired match,
Between our gallant prince and the fair Joanna,
Heiress of the Spanish realms.

Buck. It is enough.
We will delay no longer. At to-morrow's
Noon, let each one be in readiness, to
Meet the prince, and to embark upon the
Journey. Three changing moons shall not
Revolve around this teeming earth, ere we
Set foot on Spanish soil, and hail its mighty
Court and King. Success to English wooing
For Spanish brides! This expedition shall
Be memorable, I warrant me, to many
A sighing Andalusian maid, who
Will remember long the journey of the English
Courtiers to her shores, to woo and win a
Beauteous partner for their noble prince.
To-morrow then, at noon, we bid adieu
To England, and set sail for Spain.

Cec. At noon,
To-morrow, we shall meet your lordship.

[*Exeunt, L.*

Buck. (solus.) And thus my scheme moves on most
famously!
This expedition will attract more glory to my name,
Than all the by-gone triumphs of my prowess,
Or my craft. Indeed, my fame would soon have
Sunk in deep oblivion; for those who are
But statesmen of the common stamp, are soon
Forgotten by ungrateful men! But now my
Fertile brain has hit upon a scheme, rash,
Dangerous, foolish though it be; yet one,
Which will be spoken of with wonder, to the
End of time, and rescue the proud name of
Buckingham, from dark forgetfulness. And even

Though the expedition fail! What of that?
 It matters nothing. I will have had the
 Glory of the plan. What though it fail, and a
 Destructive war in turn should devastate
 The land. That matters nothing; *for I have*
Had the glory of the plan! And that great
 End attained, all other purposes are but
 Of trivial consequence. Yet I predict,
 The expedition will not fail; for Buckingham
 But seldom fails. And then our private pleasures
 In the Spanish capital,—these surely will be
 New and piquant. 'Twill be a famous expedition!

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Palace of the Escorial in Spain.*—PHILIP II.
and his courtiers discovered.

Enter MARQUIS OF TOLEDO *and* DON ALFONSO, L.

Tole. Sire, we come to apprise your majesty,
 Of the arrival of the embassy of your
 Illustrious brother, King of England; concerning which,
 Your trusty servants at that Court,
 Have sent your majesty, already, due and
 Timely notice. They have been escorted
 To my palace, and are now my guests.
 They crave a public audience of our
 King, that they may then present their
 Royal master's greeting, and with all due forms
 Of courtly etiquette, may woo and win
 The fair Infanta for their prince.

K. Phil. We hear of the arrival

Of this train of noble Britons, and their
 Blooming prince, with hearty welcome.
 It is our pleasure, that they be received
 With fullest honor, and that, as soon
 As may be, you conduct them to our presence.

Exit, TOLEDO, R.

Alf. Already have I seen your visitors,—
 These noble and illustrious strangers. They are
 Worthy of your sovereign courtesy

K. Phil. Where saw you them?

Alf. In the Marquis of
 Toledo's palace.

K. Phil. Well, what think you
 Of their rank and greatness? I presume
 They must be worthy, in magnificence and
 Splendor, of the important mission
 Which conducts them hither?

Alf. All Madrid already echoes
 With loud applauses of their courtly grace,
 Their lofty chivalry, their lavish waste of gold;
 And what is not less grateful, to the peerless
 Beauties of your court, their adoration
 Of our noble Spanish dames. Their youthful
 Prince appears, himself, a model of most manly
 Beauty; while his attendants all reflect
 High honor on themselves and him.

K. Phil. I must admit, that from your
 Own description, from the renowned greatness
 Of their nation, and from the strange and
 Striking novelty of this rare expedition,
 I am in haste to see these visitors. So
 When their public presentation to us
 Is announced, let all our court attend,
 In full array, that in this great, imposing
 Presence, the ancient chivalry of Spain
 May not appear, unworthy of itself.

Exeunt, COURTIERS, R. and L.

(*Solus.*) The times have been, (now past indeed,)
 Where these aspiring dwellers on that distant,
 Petty, foggy island of the Northern seas,
 Were little better than barbarians;
 Unknown in th' glorious annals both of arts and

Arms. The onward march of empires is
 Astounding ! Once the ancient crown of Spain shone
 Brightest in the glorious firmament of kings.
 Then, for an English prince to have presumed,
 Upon an alliance with our house would
 Have been laughable impertinence. Yet,
 Since a fitful fate has now exalted England,
 And made her equal to our ancient glory,
 We must pretend, cajole, deceive ;
 Involve them in the endless mazes of our
 Courtly etiquette, and then, at length, dismiss
 Them, doubtful if they shall prevail or
 Not. Yes ! that shall be my policy.
 It is the wisest, safest, best !

2.)

SCENE II.—*Palace of DON ALFONZO at Madrid.*

Enter LAURA, CONSTANZA, and LORENZO, L.

Laura. How I do long to hear some news to-day !
 I do declare that all the gossip
 Of the court, has grown to me intolerably
 Stale and flat. For once, I should delight to hear
 Something wonderful and startling.

Lor. Then, for once, you shall admit
 That you are gratified. I now have something
 Truly wonderful to tell you.

Con. Indeed, what can it be ?
 Something wonderful to us here in Madrid,
 Must indeed possess a nature almost
 Miraculous.

Lor. Well, then, a most mysterious
 Embassy, consisting of twelve noblemen, has
 Arrived, this very day, at our court.

Lau. Whence do they come ?

Lor. They come from England.

Con. For what purpose ?

Lor. For a very curious purpose, and withal,
 For a very interesting one.

Lau. What can it be, Lorenzo ?

Lor. What is most interesting
 Of all things to a woman ?

Lau. Nothing in all the world
Does interest me at this moment. Not even
You, Lorenzo, fascinating as you are !
But there are some who say, that love is
Most agreeable of all things. If 'tis so,
I wish that I might feel it once, if for no other
Reason than for the novelty of the thing.

Lor. Strange to say, the English prince desires
To have a wife !

Con. That is certainly very
Strange. Who ever heard before, that a
Prince desired a wife ! This is indeed a novelty !

Lor. These twelve noblemen have come,
Commissioned by the king of England,
To negotiate a marriage with the Infanta.

Lou. I hope they may not meet
Success. Those Englishmen, from all that I have
Ever heard, are such stern, such cold, such
Selfish creatures !

Con. There is a much greater
Fault than that among them. They are
The most obstinate heretics in the world !

Lou. Santa Maria ! protect us.

Lor. But these cavaliers
Are said to be the most
Accomplished, fascinating men.
You must both beware of them.

Lau. You need not caution *me*.
If all the female hearts in Spain, were as
Invulnerable to their darts as I,
These gentlemen would have their labor for
Their pains, and would return again to their
Distant, foggy island, precisely as
They came, without one single heart to triumph o'er

Lor. My fairest Laura,
Do not be too confidant, I do conjure you.
Cupid is a most capricious, wilful creature.
He wounds, you know not how, or when, or where ;
And he must be a skilful surgeon who can
Extract his festering dart, when once 'tis fairly lodged,
Do not exult untill these gallants are all
Safely gone again. Let me repeat

My caution to you both.—Beware !

Con. Absurd, I fear no danger !

Lau. Nor I. I give them leave to
Wound *me* if they can ! They will deserve
The highest praises they receive, if they
Succeed in doing it ! I will even lure them
On, to try their utmost skill. And when their
Arts are all exhausted, and have failed,
I'll jest upon my British lords, and all
Their silly thoughts of Spanish love and women !

SCENE III.—*Audience Chamber of PHILIP II., in the Escorial. The King and full array of Courtiers discovered. King on the Throne.*

Enter MARQUIS TOLEDO, BUCKINGHAM, SIDNEY, ROCHESTER,
GRAHAM, CECIL, and DON ALFONZO, L.

Tol. If it please your majesty, I here
Present to you, his Grace, the Duke of Buckingham,
And these most noble lords, ambassadors
From the king of England.

K. Phil. (to Buck.) My lord Duke,
Accept our cordial greeting. You are welcome
To our Spanish realm and capital.

Buck. I thank your majesty !
We come as the ambassadors of our English
Monarch ; to present to you, in all good faith,
His own fraternal greeting, and then, to open
Conference with your court on a more
Tender theme.

K. Phil. I pray you, what is it ?

Buck. It is to crave a lasting alliance
Between the crowns of England and of Spain,
By the marriage of our monarch's son,
Now in your realm, with your fair daughter,
The Infanta.

K. Phil. This is, indeed, my lord,
A grave proposal, and one that touches
Nearly, our own heart and sceptre.

Buck. And so in truth it does.
But yet, 'tis one which our great nation

Doth approve, and one to which we trust your Majesty will yet affix your solemn sanction. 'Tis a most noble, princely purpose, Thus to bind vast empires in close unity And concord, by the strong and tender ties Of love. Ten thousand evils, thus, are Warded off, of war, of bloodshed, and of general Ill, which might have devastated kingdoms, And laid low, in hopeless ruin, their Growing greatness. Our prince is young and Chivalrous. The Infanta is most beautiful And tender. We pray kind heaven, that this Proposed alliance may be accomplished, And bind in harmony and peace two distant Realms, two great and mighty nations.

K. Phil. It may be so.

A proposition of such grave import, Should not be entertained by us in haste. We and our supreme council will gravely Consider of it. Meanwhile, you are our Honored guests. The brilliant spectacles, The gay delights, the sights and wonders of all Spain Are open to your free fruition. Let it not be a sad time with you here In Spain; but let your exile be a joyous one. All the honors of our court, and the pleasures Of our capital, are at your welcome feet.

Buck. We pray your majesty To accept our thanks. And now we say Farewell, until such time, as we may learn Your final purpose and decree, concerning the Infanta. And here are the dispatches, Touching the great purpose of our mission, With which our sovereign master hath entrusted Us, to be delivered to your royal hands.

[Delivers dispatches to the king.]

SCENE IV.—*Private Apartment of the Duke of Buckingham.*

Enter BUCKINGHAM and SIR WILLIAM SIDNEY.

Buck. My lord Sidney, this is most certainly

A gay and cheerful land, for all the men are
 Full of chivalry, and all the women
 Are desperate in their loves. Already
 Have I met an amorous adventure,
 Full of terrible excitement. These Spanish
 Women,—if they once adopt you as their
 Bosom's lord, will love you with an ardor
 Of devotion, which is truly fearful to the
 Frigid dwellers of a colder clime.
 I doubt not, should their sweets of love
 Be turned to jealous hate, 'twould mingle
 With it all the bitterness of hell. Let me
 Warn you, my impetuous friend,
 Stiletos are in fashion here, in fairest hands,
 As much as in the ruder grasp of ruffians.

Sid. I grant you that, most willingly, my lord,
 And yet these Spanish beauties are so lovely,
 So bewitching, that their smiles are cheaply
 Bought, e'en at the risk of life or limb.

Buck. Oh, what a glorious spectacle
 Was that we saw last eve? These Spanish
 Bull-fights are most worthy of their high renown.
 Have you seen them?

Sid. Yes, I have seen them.

Buck. Who can behold the splendid
 Bright array of beauty, heightened the
 Intense excitement of the scene; the neighing
 Horses, the dauntless *toros*, the heroic
Metodores, the echoing *bravos*, the
 Acclamations far and wide resounding,
 The well-fought battles, and the bloody
 Victories,—without delight? But Sidney, [*approaching*
him.]

Why so serious? What has now occurred to
 Cast so sad a shade upon your cheerful
 Countenance? Something has given you
 The aspect of a gloomy, whining priest.

Sid. Had you beheld what I
 Have seen, you had been gloomy too. Already
 Has my sturdy heart been vanquished, and led
 Captive, by Spain's fairest, and most beauteous
 Daughter. And unrequited love, you know,

Perhaps from past experience, is saddening.

Buck. Can it be possible ?

Come, tell me all about it.

Sid. It occurred last evening,

At the amphitheatre. All Madrid was present
In its pomp, its pride, its beauty. Just after
The first victim had stained the earth with
His reeking blood, and was dragged forth,
Dead, from the arena; I turned to view
The mighty circle of that teeming,
Multitudinous sea of life; when near
Me, I caught the most enchanting vision
Human eyes have e'er beheld; a creature,
Whose matchless loveliness at once enchained
My soul. I looked, and looked again.
Each glance of love absorbed new draughts of
Amorous fire, until I burned with an
Admiring rapture, to which I had ever
Been a stranger.

Buck. Wonderful !

Well, what then ?

Sid. The lady, I assure you, is indeed,
Immaculate perfection ! I approached her.
Her mother alone attended her. With an
Uncovered head, and with such courteous
Deference, as peerless beauty e'er
Inspires true chivalry, I spoke to her ;
(The freedom of this loving land permitting
It, to those of equal rank ;) begged pardon
For my freedom, and ventured some indifferent
Questionings. I have her gracious leave
To visit her. My heart is full of rapture
At the thought that I shall soon again
Behold her peerless charms, and pour into
Her listening ear a burning tale of love.

Buck. Pray, tell me, who *can* this rare
Model of perfection be ?

Sid. She is the Countess Laura,
Daughter of a noble Spanish Grandee,
Duke Alfonzo, one of the magnates of Madrid.

Buck. Well, enough of this rhapsodic love
At present. I wish you full success in

This your first adventure. Ours is an
 Embassy of love, you know. Venus and Cupid
 Are our tutelary gods, beneath whose
 Auspices this expedition has been
 Begun. We should account our tender triumph
 Neither few nor insignificant.
 So fare you well, and when we next shall meet
 Let me then hear the happy progress,
 And the final triumph of your suit,
 Methinks the interest of your own adventure.
 Henceforth take precedence of th' royal match
 Between the prince and the Infanta.

SCENE V.—*Garden of DON ALFONSO's Palace. SIR WILLIAM SIDNEY, and DONNA LAURA discovered in the midst of shrubbery. A bower in the rear.*

Lau. If what you say be true,—my lord,
 Nor do I doubt it ;—your's must be a noble
 Land,—the home of mighty heroes,
 Statesmen, artists ; and were I not a Spaniard,
 I might choose to be a Briton.

Sid. It is indeed, my fair one !
 I am proud that I was born its citizen.
 But Spain can also boast of many
 Immortal names, in arts and arms, in beauty
 And in song.

Lau. Your nation has at least one
 Glaring fault ;—a serious one to us, the tender
 Sex ! You are too cold and formal ; you know
 Not how to love ; and without love, life here, with us
 In Spain, becomes indeed a cheerless waste,
 A heavy burden !

Sid. How strangely you
 Mistake us ! We Britons may indeed not be
 As wild, impassioned, fervent as the
 Lovely denizens of this fair sunny clime ;
 But, believe me, we can love as deeply,
 As truly, and as well as they. That love
 Is not the strongest, which sends forth
 The loudest clamor. We have an ancient
 Adage in our land, which says that

Deepest waters run the stillest.
And so it is with love ; although indeed,
Whene'er its onward course is stopped by
Stern and rugged obstacles, its stream will
Boil, and fret, and burst in fury o'er them.

[*Laura surveys him admiringly.*

Lau. Pray, Sir William, have you
Ever loved ? 'Tis a strange question, truly,
But 'tis one I crave to know. It is my
Present humor.

Sid. Let me answer it,
Fair questioner, by asking, in reply,
Have you e'er felt the strange emotion ?

Lau. My heart is free ; free as the air of heaven !
I have beheld the noblest gallants of the
Land. I have admired their grace ; and
Praised their manly beauty. I have oft
Been wooed. But I have never yet been won.
My heart has not been touched by all their
Arts of tender witchery, and amorous
Craftiness. And now, that you are freely
Answered, answer me as freely !

Sid. Were I to answer falsely,
I should injustice do to all your charms.
Were I to answer truly, it would cover
O'er my brow, with crimson blushes.
What is true love ? I long to know
Your thought upon it.

Lau. If I have never felt it,
How can I then describe it ? And yet, from
Books, and legends, and from the daily incidents
Of men, I think I may have learned to
Picture forth its nature.
I suppose it is a curious passion ;
Half joy, half grief, half sweet, half bitter.
Its heavenly sweetness, not an angel's tongue
Can tell. Its demon bitterness, no winged
Thought can fathom. 'Tis sometimes based
On graceful charms of outward form.
But that love is the noblest, which springs up
In the admiring soul of woman, when
She views, and comprehends the high supremacy

Of mind in him she loves; the grandeur
 Of that intellectual power, which ranges forth
 A facile conqueror o'er all the high
 And fair domains of knowledge, and which proves
 The man she loves, coequal with a god.
 The bard's undying verse, the statesman's craft,
 The soldier's heroism, the orator's fervent
 Tongue,—these feed the flame of woman's highest
 Love, with noblest and immortal fuel.
 This love will fill the soul with heavenly
 Forms of light; and make it pregnant with
 Rich fancy's varied loveliness. It comes, indeed,
 Unbidden; but it ne'er departs again.
 If it be requited, it will cast auroral
 Radiance round the soul; and turn this earth,
 With all its woes, into a paradise
 Of bliss. Time then becomes too short, for its
 Fruition; and life itself, too transient, to exhaust
 Its deep, unfathomable joys. All human
 Good and ill become indifferent in their
 Nature; since all are thus transmuted to
 Delight. But if this love be scorned, and
 Trod upon, it then becomes an agony,
 So terrible and distracting, that all
 The tortures of the lost are trifles to it.
 Is it not so?

Sid. Thy thoughts and words
 Are beautiful, as is the angelic form
 From which they emanate. (*kneels.*)
 My fairest Laura, let this heavenly
 Bliss of which thou speakest, be mine.
 A stranger from a distant clime, I
 Am thy suppliant lover. I would live
 And die for thee! One word of hope from
 Those sweet lips, as fragrant as the rosy
 Breath of morn, will give me life and joy.
 One frown on that fair brow, as smooth and pure
 As Dian's heaving breast, will overshadow
 Me with gloom.—Oh! thou most eloquent
 Expounder of man's inmost nature,
 Words cannot tell how deep is that
 Devotion, with which thy charms have filled

My soul. Accept a heart that would
Be thy eternal slave!

Lau. Rise, my lord,
I'm not indifferent to your merit.
My heart is not incapable of love.
But this proposal, though 'tis honorable,
Is too hasty; and maiden modesty forbids
That I should thus so soon be wooed,
Or so easily be won. Yonder I see
My honored father's form, amid the hanging foliage.

[*ALFONSO appears in the rear.*

Let us now bid adieu to these sweet themes
Until we meet again. Then, my lord, I
Will permit my heart to dictate the true
Language of my lips. Let me go to meet him!

[*Retires toward ALFONSO.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Apartment of the Duke of BUCKINGHAM.*

Enter BUCKINGHAM, SIDNEY, and SIR RICHARD GRAHAM.

Buck. Well, Sidney, how comes on your tender suit with that personified perfection of yours. 'The Countess,—what is her name?

Sid. I suppose, my lord, you mean the Countess Laura?

Buck. I suppose I do; but I confess, that in this instance, you know my "supposition" better than I do myself. Is she very difficult to win? If she be, one thing is certain, and that is, that she is a rare anomaly in the history of Spanish women,—the only instance throughout all

Spain, of a woman who is chary of her favors, and who may not be had by any good-looking fellow like myself, for the simple respectful asking. Indeed, so far have these dark-eyed, impassioned donnas carried their obliging complacency toward me, that they have even ventured to relieve me of that single trouble; and have offered their affection *gratis*. Of this, the abundance has become so great that my powers of accommodation have indeed been overtasked, and I have been compelled for several days to suspend hostilities. Sir Richard, what has been your experience in the matter of Spanish gallantry?

Gran. Well, while I cannot boast of such great triumphs in the world of beauty in Madrid, as you seem to do, I have not been here two whole weeks without meeting some adventure. You have, however, greatly the advantage of me, my lord, in your superior charm of person and skill in female fascination. In these things, I confess, I am no equal to the Duke of Buckingham!

Buck. (to Sidney.) Why, Sidney, I see you still retain your solemn monkish face. Are you still enduring the pangs of that barbed arrow, which Cupid lately lodged in your breast? It must have festered sorely during all this time. Doubtless, there is but one fair hand throughout all Spain, which can act the successful surgeon, and extract that penetrating shaft. How is this?

Sid. Don't jest on such a serious subject.

Buck. A serious subject? Ridiculous! Do you pretend to speak of the love of woman as a serious thing?

Sid. The love of some women I regard as a serious thing, my lord.

Buck. Do you indeed! Tell me the difference between them. To me, the love of one woman is exactly the same as that of another. They are all the trivial plaything of an hour. To me they all grow stale alike.

Sid. Perhaps they do: such as those whose love so great a trifle as you, may be able to win.

Buck. What mean you? You are quite ambiguous.

Sid. What I mean is, that if you once secure the affections of a noble, accomplished, and confiding woman, she deserves your constancy, and your unchanging tenderness. Your professed *intrigantes* whose love is but the gratification of a transient whim; who expect to cast you off

themselves, as soon as their greedy appetite is sated, and a newer or more fascinating lover attracts them,—such women you may serve accordingly. But all women are not of this character; and last of all, the best and most excellent of women to whom you now refer.

Buck. I suppose, of course, that you now allude to this wonderful charmer of yours, the Donna Laura?

Sid. Most certainly I do.

Buck. Let me assure you, that you soon will get over all that nonsense. If your *inamorata* is fairer, and more tender than all other women, she may inspire you at first with a deeper and intenser passion; but this new flame will soon grow cold, like hundreds before it; and ere we take our final leave of Spain, and Spanish women, you will almost have forgotten that the divine Laura had ever existed. Take my word for it; I am no novice in these mysterious and delicate matters.

Sid. My lord, I am something of a gallant, I acknowledge. But I have never learned to trifle with woman's affections, to the same cold, heartless, and utterly unfeeling extent which you do.

Buck. Absurd! let me tell you, and if you do not know it, 'tis high time that you should learn it,—that all women, without exception, are extremely selfish. Even their love is nothing but absolute selfishness. What does a woman love you for, in case she love at all; which has, indeed, become a rare event; unless it be because she finds, or imagines that she finds, in your superior charms of mind or person, the more potent and effective instruments wherewith to gratify her own passion? Why, for instance, does a woman admire the graceful form, the handsome features, the fair proportions, and the vigorous limbs of such a graceful gallant as I am, (*surveying himself*;) unless it be because she knows that such superior advantages as I possess, render me the more exquisite and fascinating in all the sports of love?

Sid. I own, there is some truth in that.

Buck. If women, therefore, in their supreme selfishness, are willing to make use of you, to gratify their own purposes, you should also do the same in regard to them; that is, merely use them as the instruments of your own convenience, and when the occasion ends, which made

them useful or agreeable to you, cast them off, as you would an old, ill-fashioned, worn-out garment !

Sid. Doubtless there is much truth in what you say.— You are a profound philosopher, my lord, in matters of this kind. Your argument half convinces me. The idea of disinterested love in woman, must be an outright absurdity. I will act upon your counsel ; and when we sail from Spain, there will be no freer heart or more desperate gallant in all our company than myself.

Buck. Another thing, do you remember, and that is, when they talk to you pathetically of dying at your departure, of their breaking hearts ; of the dreary desolation of your absence, and so on, and so on ;—that all these poetical, romantic declamations, are common stock in trade with them, and though they sound very meltingly indeed, the fair lips which utter them, mean, in reality, just nothing at all ; and laugh at your parting tenderness, just as soon as your back is turned, and with watery eyes, you have said your last adieu. But I must hasten hence to the amphitheatre. My favorite *metadore*, to-day, will fight the most furious of the Valencian bulls ; and I have promised to throw him a purse of gold if he is victorious in the conflict. Adieu !

[*Exeunt, R. and L.*]

SCENE II.—*Palace of DON ALFONSO, at Madrid.*

Enter SIDNEY, preceded by a SERVANT, who offers him a seat, and then retires. Time, evening.

Sid. (c.) [solus.] This is the fatal and decisive hour Unless I am deceived, which shall decide the Destiny of this fair child of Spain. I am Resolved to ply my arguments with more than Usual skill. I'll utter all the sweetest Eloquence of words, of looks, of sighs ; and E'en if need be, I will fall into the melting Mood, but will win her to my purpose. I have so planed it, that e'er I leave her Here, my trusty servant will request Admittance to Alfonso's palace, with Letters informing me, that my sudden Absence and hasty trip to England, will

Not be required. But I will then, already,
Have won the blooming prize, and I will stay
To revel leisurely in all her matchless
Charms.—Ah! here she comes! Now let
My crafty powers be all awake!

Enter LAURA, L.

Sid. Fair Laura, how have I
Longed to see this happy hour! How has that
Envious sluggard Time dragged slowly on,
To vex me with his crippled, halting gait!

Lau. You are welcome to-day, Sir William.
Love, *that* love of which we spoke, when last we
Met, is a most restless spirit, and eager to attain
The end of its adventurous journey.

Sid. And have you thought upon
My humble suit, since then, fair Laura?

Lau. I have, my Lord.

Sid. Oh, then, promise the happy word,
That thou art mine, and I will cherish thy
Sweet love, while life endures.

Lau. [*pausing and looking seriously at him.*]
Are you sure, my lord, that no alloy of self
Mingles with that pure love? Oh, should I take
Thee at thy word, and give thee this fond, trusting
Heart, in lieu of thine; and should thine own
Be false,—a hollow counterfeit of that,
Which I thee truly give; oh, how would I
Execrate the hour, when first I saw thee,
Or listened to the melting melody of
That alluring tongue.

Sid. Believe me, Laura, that
I am true. I swear by yonder moon, which
Sheds her mellow beauty o'er the sleeping world,
That I will aye be constant. I swear by
All those twinkling stars, which glitter brightly
In yon azure vault, far, far beyond the
Reach of all earth's woes and tears, that I will
Love thee truly.

Lau. I take thy solemn oath. (*impressively.*)

Sid. And thou wilt then be mine?

Lau. Yes. Thine, for ever thine ! (*embracing.*)

Sid. Oh, rich delight ! Oh, rapture !

More than faltering words can speak. From this
Propitious day I live anew ; anew, my love, to thee.
And I shall ever bless the hour when first I thought
To visit this far land. How strangely is
The chequered tissue of our destiny,
Woven by th' mysterious hand of Providence
And Fate ! Now may I taste those joys, of which
Thou speak'st, when thou didst tell of love,—
Its wondrous power and sweetness. Thou dost possess.
In me, a true heart, Laura !

Lau. Were it not so, then
Should I be, indeed, a wretched bankrupt.

Sid. Dream not, for a moment, dearest,
Of future sorrow or distress.
True love, thou said'st, made all things sweet.
To us, the future now will be one endless
Song. My eager fancy travels o'er life's
Coming journey, on the rainbow wings of
Hope, and sees naught there, through its wide circuit,
Save love and bliss. We have a poet in our land,
Who sings so sweetly of true love, that I
Will speak his flowing numbers. Will you listen ?

Lau. I would not lose a syllable
For half the world !

Sid. These then are his sweet words : (*recites or sings.*)

When time who steals our years away,
Shall steal our pleasures too,
The memory of the past will stay,
And half our joys renew.

Then, Laura, when thy beauty's flower,
Shall feel the wintry air ;
Remembrance shall recall the hour,
When thou alone wert there.

Then talk no more of future gloom,
Our joys shall always last ;
For hope shall brighten days to come,
And memory gild the past.

Lau. They are sweet words indeed.

Sid. When shall I say my joy is full?
When shall I clasp thee to my heart, and call
Thee mine, by holy, sacred ties?

Lau. Although I dearly prize thy love,
Why this great eagerness to hasten on our union?

Sid. I have a secret now to tell thee!

Lau. How? a secret? What can it be?

Sid. I have delayed the mournful word
Till we had plighted each our sacred faith.
Now, that is done, I can the better utter it.

Lau. Pray delay it not; what is it?

Sid. The Duke of Buckingham, in whose control
Is placed this treaty for the marriage of the Infanta,
Has just informed me that it is most needful
That I should start, at once, for England,
As special messenger to our king.

Lau. It cannot be!

Sid. It is, alas! too true.

And I cannot leave thy sight, nor bear the thought
That thou art not yet wholly mine; that thou
Mayest, by some horrid chance, be yet another's.
For thou art wooed by all the noblest chivalry
Of Spain. Thy beauty is too rich a boon,
Not to attract their amorous craving.
In my sad, unwilling absence, thy tender heart,
Open to the potent witcheries of love,
May yield itself at length a captive ere
I return; and place a death-seal on my bliss!

Lau. (*solemnly.*) Canst thou
Distrust my faith, my plighted love? Ah! little
Dost thou know the heart which thou hast won.

Sid. Can I distrust *thee*, dearest? Never!
No unworthy fear of thy devotion
Crossed my mind. But here, in Spain, you have
Strange laws. Your gloomy convert walls
Enclose too many a beauteous living gem,
Of radiance almost divine, placed there,
In durance stern, by their offended sires. Thou art
A Catholic. Thy father, family, and church,
May all oppose our union; and thus when I return
From my far distant, native isle, I then may find
Thee a buried tenant of some convert cell,

Lost to me for ever. Not all the prayers and tears
In Spain could free thee then. But if thy church
Hath made thee mine, I will then feel secure in
The possession of thy inestimable love.

Lau. I do not fear such peril to our joy.
What would avail their prohibition of our love?
Nothing with me. True love regards no church,
Nor kindred, nor relationship, in all the world,
Save that of one alone—the beloved! There is **my**
Temple, that my priest, and he my deity!

Sid. But they have power greater
Far than thine. If thou refusest, I will forfeit
Home, and friends, and all, for thee! I will forsake
The embassy. I will endure the miseries
Of the homeless exile, rather than desert thee!
I will not leave thee till thou art mine; till
Thou art mine by sanction of thy holy church.

Lau. I love thee; and I yield to thy desire.
I have no power or arguments, whereby I
May resist thy wishes, or say thee, nay.

Sid. Thou wilt, at once, be mine?
But our marriage must be *secret*.

Lau. Secret? Impossible! Why so?
So strange a freak of love hath never stained
Our house, in many generations.

Sid. It is strange, my love, I grant; but
Canst thou doubt I have a reason for it?

Lau. Pray, what can it be?
Do not rack my breast with sudden doubts
And new-born fears.

Sid. I would not, for the world.
This, then, is the occasion of my strange behest.
Were I, a member of this English embassy,
To violate all forms of courtly etiquette,
By such a sudden, hasty marriage, while the
Nuptials of the Infanta were under grave
Consideration, this court—the most precise
Of courts—would be insulted. Our negotiations
Would be instantly suspended; the object of our
Mission fail; and our offended sovereign would
Then wreak his vengeance on my head.
But let our union be but secret now,

And a few weeks elapsed and I will own
Thee to be mine to all the world; and I will
Bear thee then in joy and triumph, to my native land,
And thou shalt reign the pride and splendor
Of my English house.

Lau. I would not hurt thy interest
With thy king. I, thy best friend, could never
Act so base a part. If this be needful,
As thou sayest it is, oh, then, my willing heart
Withholds thee nothing. Let this then be
Ever as thou wishest it; tho' 'tis a strange behest.

*Enter SERVANT with letter for SIDNEY. SIDNEY whispers
in his ear, and he retires.*

Sid. (to Servant.) Be in haste!
Ah! what can this be? *(opens letter.)*

'Tis a message from the Duke of Buckingham. *(reads.)*

*"Sir Philip: At the last private audience which we had
with the King of Spain, it was determined to postpone the
immediate mission to England, to which you had been ap-
pointed, until some future day, when the judgment of the
Royal Council as to the terms of the marriage of the In-
fanta, will be more maturely considered. Buckingham."*

(He gives the letter to LAURA.)

Lau. 'Tis welcome news indeed!
I will preserve this precious letter nearest
To my heart. Thou wilt not leave me then?
Oh, can it be, Sir William, we now shall
Never part? No unexpected absence,
No sudden mission, shall take thee from
This doating heart away—not even for a day!

Sid. So it is, indeed, my fairest Laura.
And now that thou hast granted me my heart's
Request; hast promised to be mine; and mine
For ever; I have already sent my trusty
Servant, who has brought this letter, for a holy
Priest; who, when he has arrived, will join our
Willing hearts in one eternal bond.
Hither he comes. Then let us kneel, my love,
And thus receive his solemn blessing on our
Union. Oh, hour of heavenly joy and rapture!

[*Priest appears in the rear, c.—They approach him and kneel. He blesses them, as the curtain descends to music.*]

SCENE III.—*Palace of DON ALFONSO, at Madrid. DON ALFONSO, DON LORENZO, and DONNA TERESA, discovered.*

Lor. I have ventured here, to-day, my lord,
To make the offer of my heart and hand
To your fair daughter, Laura.
An ardent passion burns within my breast.
Long have I watched her blooming graces,
And I confess myself her willing captive.
If my person, rank, and fortune make
Me fit, I shall feel honored by the alliance.

Alf. Have you, as yet, directly sought her own consent ?

Lor. I own I have not. It seemed to me
More meet, that I should first obtain your
Sage approval, ere I ventured on the
Tender theme to her.

Alf. Your proposition is in truth,
A grateful one ; and the long friendship
Between our houses, makes it doubly
Pleasing to us, that our common blood
Should flow in one united channel.
Our old ancestral legends tell, that on
The bloody field of Tours, when Christian warriors,
Of many climes, beneath the mighty Charles Martel,
Hurled back the sweeping tide of Moslem
Conquest, which devastated Europe, our noble sires
Fought side by side ; breasted th' infidel
Flood together ; and there, too, vowed eternal friendship.
Their solemn oath, their children have observed,
And this new union is most worthy of
The ancient bond.

Lor. I am most proud, my lord
Of this long cherished recollection.

Alf. You should have sought
To woo herself. I fear our daughter is a
Wilful girl, and may refuse consent,
Unless her heart approves the choice.

Lor. I have indeed approached the theme with her ;

But yet, I have obtained no certain warrant
 Of her love, except such general courtesy
 As she might show to one, whose person
 Was not hateful to her. (*to Teresa.*)
 I crave your ladyship's assistance in my
 Suit; for well I know, the power a
 Mother holds over the judgment, and the heart,
 Of her fair daughter.

Ter. As I approve the alliance,
 I will promote its consummation. But
 It were well, that you should, at some appropriate
 Hour, yourself propose your suit.
 Do it boldly; and when, with many a gentle
 Sigh and maiden blush, she makes the tender
 Secret known to me, I will pretend due
 Ignorance; but yet, upon the very instant,
 Will speak the potent words which make her yours.

Alf. A fitting opportunity
 E'en now approaches. See! here she comes.
 We will now retire. Improve the occasion
 Well, and may you prosper in its issue.

Enter LAURA, L.

Lau. Good day, my honored father,
 My mother. Good day, my lord. (*to Lorenzo.*)
 I greet you all.

Alf. Our friend and visitor, Lorenzo,
 Desires a word with you in private.

[*Exeunt, ALFONSO and TERESA, L.*]

Lau. A word with me, alone, my lord?

Lor. It is so, my fair Laura.
 I have come to-day to crown our long acquaintance,
 With the offer of my heart and hand. I do
 Beseech you, think not the proposal hasty.
 I have long intended it.

Lau. I respect you, Lorenzo,
 But I am free to say, I do not love you;
 And without love, marriage would be to me
 A horrid, cruel yoke, worse than that
 The veriest slave endures.

Lor. You may not love me yet,

Indeed ; but might not soon your heart be touched
By long devotion, and by the clearest proof
Of that deep passion, with which you have
Inspired me ?

Lau. I have no hope of such an issue.

Lor. Why not ? The sight of love
Begets a flame in others. The proudest
Peeress in the land, will scent the fragrance
Of that pure incense, which rises, as a
Tribute to her charms, from the humblest of her
Adorers. And why then mayst not thou ?

Lau. I know it cannot be.

Lor. 'Tis strange indeed.

Lau. 'Tis true as strange.

Lor. Why is this ? Forgive my boldness.
But I desire to learn, wherein thy heart
Differs from all the female hearts in Spain.

Lau. I will then answer thee, Lorenzo.
'Tis due our ancient friendship, and to thy pure
Purpose, that I should answer thee.

I do already love ! My heart is now no
Longer free. Not all the charms, of all the
Graceful gallants in the land, if they were all
Combined in one, and that one were thy
Noble self, could move my heart one jot,
Or could dislodge the mighty monarch, who
Now reigns, supreme and sovereign there.

Lor. Can it be ?

Must I despair at last ?

Lau. It grieves me much to speak the word,
But I can make no other answer. Thou
Hast no hope.

Lor. My spirit then is crushed.

I cannot combat with my luckless destiny.
I pray kind heaven that thou mayest yet be happy,
That no tear may e'er bedim the lustre
Of that radiant eye ; and that no grief may
Ever sadden that noble breast—that couch
Of paradise. Let me then say, farewell !

Lau. It must be so ; farewell !

Lor. (aside.) Oh, I will be revenged
For this !

[Exit, LORENZO.]

Lau. I must hasten
 To our rendezvous. My lover, nay, my
 Husband, waits for me. Oh! what rapture
 When we meet! [Exit, LAURA, R.]

SCENE IV.—*Studio of VALESQUEZ. (A month is supposed to have elapsed.) VALESQUEZ discovered working at a portrait L. Painting and busts distributed around the apartment.*

Val. (solus.) What a most curious and mysterious
 Circumstance is this? At each new sitting
 Of the noble subject of this picture, I can
 See a saddening change upon her features.

[Stands back and surveys the painting.]

When first she sat to me, methought my eyes
 Had never rested on such a beauteous
 Vision. I then resolved, that this same painting
 Should be the most exquisite picture which e'er
 Rose to life and loveliness, beneath my
 Pencil. *[Pausing and touching up the painting.]*

But now, she scarcely seems the same.
 Her smile is gone; her radiant eye hath
 Lost its brilliant lustre. Her ruby cheek,
 That once outvied the bursting rosebud,
 Is pale and wan. That once serene and noble
 Brow is clouded o'er with care.

Here is some mystery. In very truth this
 Whole business is a mystery! The
 Lady comes, attended by a noble
 Cavalier, and closely veiled. No name is
 Given, nor address. And when the work is
 Done, himself will call for it!

I remember, too, when last she sat to me,
 They seemed constrained, less joyous than before;
 And the fair bosom of the lady heaved
 Anon, with ponderous sighs, as though
 Some unaccustomed burden crushed upon
 Her once buoyant spirit. I understand
 It not. 'Tis very strange, 'tis very strange!

Enter SERVANT, L.

Serv. My master, two distinguished visitors,
In the anti-chamber, crave admittance
To your studio.

Val. 'Tis an unseemly hour.

Serv. And yet, they urged their wishes
With great earnestness.

Val. Then bid them enter. *[Exit, Serv., R.]*

Val. (solus.) It cannot be themselves.
For they were here but yesterday; and come not,
By express appointment, till to-morrow,

Enter LORENZO and CONSTANZA, L.

Lor. We pray your pardon
For our intrusion; but we would fain
Behold the studio of so renowned an artist
As Valesquez.

Val. You do me honor, signor!
I fear your trouble will be poorly paid.

Cons. Ah! what is this? Whose portrait
Can this be? Am I deceived?

[Examines the portrait.]

Lor. As I live, 'tis she! 'Tis Laura.
But how changed! Have you seen her lately?

Cons. It cannot be the same.
'Tis but the wreck of Laura, 'tis not Laura's self!

Lor. I pray you, noble signor,
Whose portrait is this?

Val. I neither know her name,
Nor rank, nor family.

Lor. How comes she hither? Alone?

Val. No; she is attended, at each sitting,
By a noble cavalier; by one, who,
Judging from his coat of arms, his foreign
Air, and garb, belongs to the English embassy,
Which now sojourns in Spain.

Lor. 'Tis strange indeed!
Laura and an English cavalier! And all
So secret! And this distressed, afflicted air

Too ! When last I saw her, four weeks since
 She was radiant with bright hope, and joy, and beauty.
 What dark misfortune could have caused
 This melancholy change ? (to VALESQUEZ.)
 Know you nothing of her history ?

Val. Nothing. All I know is,
 She was very gay and beautiful ; now she
 Is very sad and gloomy.

Lor. (to CONSTANZA.) This attachment,
 Secret though it be, may perhaps account for my
 Rejection at her hands. She confessed her
 Heart remained no longer free. This must
 Be her chosen one, who is her companion
 Here,—this handsome English courtier.

Cons. And yet she boasted,
 On the arrival of this English embassy,
 That she would be the last one in all
 Spain, to fall a victim to their dangerous
 Fascinations ! What an egregious error !

Lor. And yet I fear me, she *has*
 Fallen ! If so, I am revenged already.
 (To VALESQUEZ.) With many thanks, most honored
 Signor, we say, adieu ! [*Exeunt, L.*

SCENE V.—*Palace of DON ALFONSO, at Madrid.* SIR
SIDNEY and LAURA discovered.

Lau. My lord, pray tell me, how has fared
 The English embassy, in the great end and
 Purpose of their mission to our court ?
 Will they obtain a Spanish bride for their
 Young prince ?

Sid. I cannot yet foretell to you,
 The issue of this embassy.

Lau. I wish the treaty
 Was already ended, that we might
 Set sail for your own native shores, and then our
 Marriage there be openly proclaimed.
 For I am wearied with this forced concealment.
 It is so irksome thus to play the hypocrite.
 (Approaching him.) But, my husband, you seem
 Quite altered from your former mood. I fear

Your sated appetite has cooled the fever
Of your love, and I have sometimes thought
That you appeared, of late, less loving than
You were; that you were even coldly courteous and
Forbidding; and the horrid thought has tortured me!

Sid. We Englishmen are not as ardent in
Our love as you romantic and impetuous
Spaniards are. 'Tis but a trifling difference
In our outward seeming. The heart remains
As fervent as before.

Lau. And yet you were at first
More ardent when we loved. Oh, what
True raptures then were ours, when first our
Hearts were plighted, and we felt that we were one

Sid. Honeymoons do not endure forever.
You seem to have forgotten that.

Lau. And yet I would have thought,
That ours had been eternal; that neither change
Of time, or place, or circumstance, could e'er
O'ercloud the brightness of our paradise,
Or cool the rapture of our love.

Sid. You Spaniards are too imaginative
And romantic. You expect too much of those
Who pledge to you their faith. We must relax
Our ardor; we should make our love a matter
Of less consequence.

Lau. Can you speak thus to me?
How sadly have you changed! After the burning
Words of love and passion, with which you wooed
And won me, how can I endure such
Chilling, such forbidding sounds!
I fear you love me now no longer! I fear
That you have never truly loved me! (*weeps.*)

Sid. (*relenting.*) Weep not thus, my fair one.
You did not comprehend my meaning.
I retract those harsh, offensive words. I pray,
Forgive me! I love you still. I swear it,
I love you still, as strongly, purely, fervently,
As when at first I pressed you to my heart.

Lau. (*looking up into his face.*) Are you
Assured you love me yet, as well?

Sid. I am most sure.

Lau. Will you swear it? Solemnly swear it?

Sid. I will, my love.

Lau. Then swear it.

Sid. (*with uplifted hand.*) I swear, in the
Face of heaven, I love thee, truly,
And thee only.

Lau. Bless thee, my true love, I
Bless thee for those tender words; far sweeter
To me than the sounds of heavenly melody.
And now, that my poor heart, so sad before,
Is full of new-born bliss, let us commune of
Future joys, and of my coming hour of
Separation from these native scenes.
I must give due announcement to my
Kindred, and prepare them for my departure.
'Twill be a sad experience, truly, to forsake
These well-remembered scenes, and all the loved
Ones of my youth; and sail a stranger to
A foreign clime. And yet, for him I love,
I will leave home, and friends, and all things
Else, however dear they be, and share the future fate
Of him whom I have chosen.

Didst thou not offer me as much, my love,
When thou didst woo me to thy breast;
And why should I be less unselfish, less
Devoted than thou art? Oh, no, my husband!
Thou dost here possess a faithful heart;
One that would boldly dare for thee, the
Utmost verge of ruin;—that would freely
Share the most pernicious freaks of fortune
Without complaint, were such sad destiny
To be thy portion.

Sid. Oh, speak it not.

No such necessity will e'er be ours.

Lau. Then tell me of thy happy home;
For it must needs be happy where thou art!
Let the sweet music of thy words portray
To my attentive ears, the scene of all
Our future joys. Whate'er it be, if only
Thou art with me there, I am content.
The humblest hovel on the earth, with him
Whom I adore, will be more bright, more

Beautiful, than would the lordliest palace
Which e'er beheld an emperor's luxury.

Sid. My love, the ancient castle of my ancestors
Now rears its towering height o'er one of England's
Fairest plains; while high and sturdy oaks, which long
Have breasted many a wintry storm, encompass
It on every side. For many a mile,
On either hand, the golden harvests wave
Beneath the pressure of a mountain breeze.
Thou shalt dwell with me there, my love. The landscape's
Verdant breast shall charm thy glowing eye.
Our thrifty peasantry shall yearly fill
Our stores. The proudest nobles of the land
Shall court thy gracious smiles. We will there
Often stray beneath the cool and whispering
Shadows of the ancient forest trees,
And talk of home, and distant scenes of
Youthful innocence and joy; of th' far
Country, and the honored friends there left
Behind. And if thou hast no longer there
The battles of the teeming amphitheatre
To charm thee, there are pleasures in our
Land not less exciting, or less perilous,
Than in thy own. The swiftest steed shall often
Pant beneath thy precious weight; and when my
Jovial kindred crowd my festive halls,
Where by-gone generations of my race
Have feasted in their day, thou shalt preside
The queen of beauty there—the fairest in the land.
And I will then be proud of thee; and as
The cheerful years revolve, unknown to care
As honored age creeps o'er us, and we grow
Old apace, our children shall surround us
As brave, as noble, and as fair as she
Who gave them birth; and they shall tend our steps
With reverent care, as we descend in peace,
The easy vale of years.

Lau. Oh, my husband,
I pant to see the happy hour when these
Sweet dreams will be but dreams, and fancy's
Airy draperies no more, but will become
Sweeter realities.

Sid. Let us then wait in patience
Till a propitious fate permits this
Happy consummation.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Audience Chamber at the Escorial.* KING
PHILIP *on his Throne*; Courtiers and Grandees *dis-*
covered R. and L.

Enter BUCKINGHAM, GRAHAM, CICIL, and ROCHESTER, L.

Buck. We have desired this final audience
Of your majesty, that we may learn your
Sovereign purpose, in reference to the
Marriage of our prince with the Infanta;
That we may then forthwith return to England.

K. Phil. Our privy council and ourself, have
Given your proposition our attention.
Though much desiring to promote this union,
There are most grave and weighty obstacles
Contained in the dispatches which you brought,
Which will oppose a lasting hindrance to
Our purpose. These all refer to the essential
Matters of religion wherein our nations
Differ. That is indeed a vital question.
The Infanta ne'er could wed your prince,
Unless your court renounced their creed
And make submission to our holy church.

Buck. Those are concessions, sire, which I am
Well assured, cannot be made. We must at
Once renounce the enterprise which brought us
Hither

K. Phil. Though this be true, we trust that
Your short sojourn in our capital
Has not occurred without its grateful
Use and purpose.

Buck. It has not, we assure you.
We have been charmed with all the sights
And pleasures, all the games and festivals,
Of this your goodly kingdom. We will carry
Hence, many a kind remembrance
Of friendship made, of hospitable greetings
Given, and also, of more tender ties,
Which have been here contracted.

K. Phil. We are pleased,
That Spain has had her charms for you.
Bear with you, to your gracious king,
Our cordial greeting and regard; and these are
The dispatches, in answer to your own,
With which we now entrust you. Present
Him also with this casket. It contains
Rich jewels, which, I trust he will accept
As a memento of our high regard for him.
And though mysterious fate has not allowed
The union of our crown upon one single
Brow; let peace and friendship reign throughout
All coming time, between our happy realms.
Such is my prayer, and such, I trust, is his.

[*Gives dispatches and casket to BUCKINGHAM.*]

Buck. Both of these shall be delivered by myself,
With th' utmost care and quick dispatch
According to your majesty's command,
To our dread sovereign's gracious hand.

SCENE II.—*Apartment in DON ALFONSO's Palace. SIDNEY and LAURA discovered seated at a table covered with oranges, melons, and other fruit.*

Sid. My fair Laura, at length, to-day,
We have received our farewell audience from
Your king. To-morrow we shall sail for England.

Lau. (surprised.) To-morrow? You
Give me but short notice truly, to make the
Needful preparation for our departure.

Sid. We were summoned, by a special order,
Quite unexpectedly, before your monarch's presence.
The Supreme Council of the realm, had just
Concluded, not to accept the terms proposed
By our good king, for the espousal of
The Infanta; and they delayed not to inform us.
After so sad an issue of our toils,
We must needs quickly leave the scene
Of our defeat. The splendor of Madrid
Is darkness to us now; no light beams forth
Amid its gorgeous palaces, save that which
Issues still from thy bright eyes alone!

Lau. Jest not, my love, at such an
Hour, so solemn, so important. Could you
Not yet delay one week, till I were in
Much better readiness t' accompany you?

Sid. It is impossible. The prince,
Our master, has commanded that we instantly
Set sail for England. But is it needful that you
Should *now* accompany me?

Lau. (*solemnly.*) Can the world live
Without the glorious sun? No more could I
Exist without the light of thy dear form.
Think of it not, I do beseech you.

Sid. But listen to me, fair one!
Our embassy returns to England now, without
The high-born bride, which had been destined for
Our prince. The members of our company
All sail in the same fleet. It were
An insult to them, and to our baffled
Leader, who sails with us, were I more fortunate than he
To bear away with me a blooming,
Noble bride, the fairest in all Spain.

Lau. I cannot live without you.
I know it well. Do not insist upon it.

Sid. But you can surely wait in
Patience till my quick return?
It is most probable, that new conditions
For this alliance, will be proposed hereafter,
To which your gracious sovereign will accede.
Then the Infanta will be borne to England,
And then you shall accompany her,

The brightest star that glitters in her train;
I, myself, will then revisit you, and
Lead you back in joyous triumph to my home.

Lau. Alas! my husband,
That event will ne'er occur. The wounded pride
Of your most noble prince will ne'er permit him
To make another proposition to our court;
While this enforced concealment of our union
Presses heavily upon my drooping spirit,
My cheeks are pale and care is printed
On my brow. The gloomy day is cheerless to me,
And 'tis only the sweet thought, that when
Each evening comes, I shall then hear again
Your welcome voice, and feel your kind
Caress,—'tis this bliss only which supports me.
But were you wholly absent, life would be a
Barden, far, far too heavy to be borne.

Sid. Nonsense! You would
Soon become accustomed to my absence.
I will return again, and quickly too.

Lau. It is impossible.
I know my heart too well;—'tis quite impossible.
I do beseech you, persist not in a
Resolution, which would seal my very death!

Sid. I cannot help it—I fear
It must be so. There can be no alternative.

Lau. Oh, no, it cannot—cannot be!
And is it possible, that you, yourself,
Should be thus willing to desert me? Oh, think,
Sir William, what have I done for you?
And what am I not willing yet to do?
I am ready e'en to leave my father's
Halls, my friends, my native land, and all
Its dear remembrances;—all would I
Leave for you; and can you now be willing to
Desert me? Oh, no, no, it cannot be!
Your absence hence would cast a wan and hideous
Desolation o'er the universe. This tortured
Frame, had better far, lie mouldering in
The long and dreamless slumber of the grave
Than that it should be racked by the
Distracting agonies of desertion.

And neglect. Oh, think of all our vows
Of endless constancy and love. Think of our
Pictured dreams of fadeless joy and bliss. Think
Of all these, and then you cannot leave me.
You will then take me with you ; press me
To your breast forever ; and we shall drink
Eternal joys from the rich cup of our true love !

Sid. No ! Do not now deceive yourself.
I say it cannot be ; nay more, it *shall*
Not be ! I have said it. You must
Remain till my return. Be not misled
By groundless and illusive hopes.

Lau. (*Pausing and assuming a determined air.*) Then, sir, if such be your base and unfeeling purpose ; if you are capable of thus trifling with the affections and the heart of one who has freely sacrificed her all for you, in reliance on your honor ; then know, sir, that I *WILL* accompany you. I am your wedded wife, to whom alone your solemn faith is plighted, and with whose destiny you have united yours forever. You shall not leave me. It is my right. If you are so strangely lost to all due sense of honor, shame, humanity, I will not permit you, having wrecked my happiness, also to ruin my fair fame, and the reputation of those I love. I will go instantly to the Duke of Buckingham ;—to him who, you say, would be offended at my proposal to accompany you. I will tell him the story of our attachment and our marriage. I will obtain his permission, nay his command, that if you now leave Spain at all, you shall not go without me.

Sid. Then, madam, you may execute your purpose.—Go ! go to the Duke of Buckingham. Tell him that you are, as you assert, my wedded wife, and he will laugh you to very scorn. He will tell you that you are mistaken.—He will assure you that I am already married in England. He will tell you that you are but my *mistress* ! and that he cannot have mistresses on board the fleet intended for the Infanta. Go—tell the Duke you are my wife, forsooth ! What a delusion ! My wife, indeed ! Ha ! ha !

Lau. Oh, God ! then
I am ruined ! ruined ! ruined !

[*Stupefied with agony, she falls on the floor. SIDNEY becomes much affected. After a pause he carries her to a sofa.*]

Sid. (solus.) She would compel me
 Thus to utter the unwelcome words. Alas!
 'Tis over now! Rest there, unhappy one!
 I have wronged indeed a noble heart.
 But 'tis too late to undo the accursed deed.
 Now is my time for escape! One kiss more,
 My fair, my injured Laura, 'tis the last (*kisses her.*)
 Forever! Never shall I press again those
 Tender lips, which have so often uttered to me
 Words of more than mortal love. So farewell,
 Forever! To-morrow I shall be sweeping
 O'er the boundless deep. I may forget thee;
 But, I fear, I cannot be forgotten.
 Conscience! let thy voice be hushed; and let
 Remorse be dead within my breast.
 But hold! her portrait; ah, yes! that mute and feeble
 Image of her beauty, that sad memento
 Of her wrongs. I must not fail to take that
 With me. It will be all I shall possess
 Of my fair, devoted, injured Laura.
 Yes, I will hasten to the studio of Valesquez,
 Instantly.

SCENE III.—*Apartment in DON ALFONSO's Palace.*

Enter DON ALFONSO and DONNA TERESA.

Alf. Have you not seen, of late, the strange, mysterious
 Sadness of your daughter?

Ter. I have; it is too marked
 To be unnoticed.

Alf. What, think you, is the cause of it?

Ter. I know not. Ne'er before has
 Such despondency o'ershadowed her
 Once joyous countenance.

Alf. I must question her.
 For some days past she has endured much
 Misery; and it was but yesterday, when,
 Unexpectedly I entered her apartment,
 She seemed the hapless victim of some fierce
 Convulsion; some cruel spasm of distress;
 And yet, to all my earnest questionings

I gained no answer ; nothing but her tears.

(*Rings for a Servant.*)

Doubtless she will now confess the truth
With kind and dutiful affection.

Enter SERVANT.

Wait on your young

Mistress, and inform her, we wish

To see her here, immediately.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Ter. You remember, doubtless,
That one of the English cavaliers has
Been most marked in his attentions.
Whether he has offered marriage, I know not.
But doubtless, the departure of the embassy
To-day, which is now rumored through
Madrid, may have distressed her ; as her
Friend and suitor has departed with them.

Enter LAURA, L.

Alf. We have observed with pain,
That you have been of late most sad.
Our love constrains us to speak freely to you,
And inquire the cause ; so that, if we
Can haply cure it, we may instantly attempt
The pleasing task.

Lau. Ah, my honored father,
Mine is a distress, which the kind hand of your
Affection ne'er can heal. The tortures of
The wounded spirit are incurable.
No earthly balm can soothe the anguish
Of this torn and lacerated heart. It seems that
Time but adds intensity to its deep bitterness ;
While memory, with a willing and relentless hand,
Feeds the burning flame with its eternal fuel.
I shall ne'er be happy more ! (*weeps.*)

Alf. What is the nature
Of your distress ? Speak it boldly.

Lau. Oh, I cannot, dare not.

Ter. Why can you not ? To whom
Should your secret troubles be revealed,

Unless it be to us ?

Lau. It will afflict you more
To know the truth, than if you knew it not.
Your ignorance now is bliss indeed.

Ter. No, it is not. This long
Suspense augments our misery, and it becomes
Intolerable. Speak at once, without reserve.
Here comes your brother Pedro. 'Tis right
That he should hear the history of your wo,
And if it should be needful, to avenge it.

Enter DON PEDRO, R.

He, too, has marked the deep, mysterious
Sadness which oppresses you.

Ped. I have. How is this ?
Do I suspect aright the horrid truth ?
Who has thus dared to trifle with thee ? Thou comest
Of the proudest race in Spain. Princes might
Feel honored with thy fair alliance ; and it would
Not be the first who mingled with our line.
I swear, it were not prudent for an emperor
To dishonor thee. Thy snowy arms might
Form a downy couch, fit for a god to revel in.
How is this ?

Lau. I was wooed and won by Sir William
Sidney, a noble member of the English embassy.
Persuaded by true love, and his own eager prayers,
I married him in secret, and I was deceived,
For he had no free hand or heart to give.
He was already wed in his own land,
And now he has, at last, deserted me ! (*weeps.*)

Ped. Ye heavens ! can it be possible !
Thee ruined ! thee deceived, and thee dishonored ! (*pauses.*)
Thou God of vengeance, let me draw thy sword,
And never rest until I sheathe it in the
Inmost heart of him who has so basely
Wronged her ! Ye solemn shades of our
Departed ancestors, look down from your
Serene abodes, on this unhappy daughter
Of your race, and fill my anguished soul with
Vengeance !—vengeance !—vengeance ! (*crosses.*)

Hark ! I hear it ! A hollow, shrieking sound
Issues from their ancient graves. It goes abroad
Upon the winged wind, and cries aloud : wo ! wo !
To thee and thine, unless thou wip'st away
This damned stain upon our pure escutcheon,
With the guilty blood of the offender !
And I will do it, by the God of heaven,
I will do it !

Lau. Do it not, I beseech you.
For my sake harm him not. I love him.
I forgive him ! and I love him still !

Ped. Ask not for mercy, in his behalf,
He has deeply, foully, basely wronged thee !
Human baseness has no deeper depths of
Injury than that which he has sounded,
For he cannot right thee, if he would.
He cannot do thee justice, or suppress the
Bitter, jeering malace of the prating world.
Thou art ruined, and he did it knowingly.
Where is he ?

Lau. He sailed but yesterday
With the English embassy, and he is now beyond
The reach of vengeance.

Ped. Why didst thou thus permit
Him to escape ?

Lau. Because I feared thy furious
Arm. I trembled for the precious life of
Him, I value more than life itself.
Though he has wronged me, he did it in
The burning heat of passion. I still believe
He loved me. *He* could not be so base,
So false, so cruel. He had some unknown
Cause, I knew not of, to plead in his excuse.

Ped. It is thy fault that this unequalled
Villain hath escaped. But hold ! The day
Of vengeance will arrive. It may be slow,
But it will yet be sure.

Alf. Were it not well for you
To leave awhile these hapless scenes, so
Sad'ning by the desolation memory
Gives them ?

Ter. Yes. Let us leave Madrid for a

Short season. Let us hasten to the
 Castle of your ancestors, which rears its
 Ancient towers amid the shady groves of
 Andalusia. There our daughter may
 Regain her peace of mind. The quiet scenes
 Of verdant nature, where rural innocence
 And beauty reign, unmarred by human
 Passion and unfeeling baseness may refresh
 And cheer thee. For there, shut out from
 All the stormy tumults of a guilty world,
 Alone with God and Nature,—there, at least, thou
 Mayest be happy, and forget thy bitter wo.

Alf. I approve thy purpose.
 Let it be so.

Lau. I will obey
 Your kind request.

SCENE IV.—*Castle of DON ALFONSO in Andalusia. LAURA
 discovered standing on one of the terraces of the Castle.
 Mountains and forests in the rear. Time, evening.*

Lau. (solus.) Lovely nature, oh, how calm and peaceful
 Seems thy verdant breast! Thou look'st as tho' no
 Anguish, such as mine, could e'er exist
 Amid thy rural and sequestered scenes.
 'Tis here the storms of human misery
 Appear for ever hushed. Here bitter
 Wrong and outrage seem unknown. Here love
 And concord do appear to be eternal
 As is the long and calm succession of thy years!

(Suddenly arousing herself.)

He's gone for ever! Yes, my lover, husband;
 The lord of this poor, broken heart; the noblest
 Of his race; and yet, alas! a beauteous *devil*!
 Stay, thou rolling ocean! Stay your rushing
 Waves! Ye bear away upon your bosoms,
 Far, far from me, my very heart, my soul,
 My life! Oh, where shall I repose this
 Aching head? A burning fire consumes me,
 Intense as that which flamed of old on
 Molock's iron altars; and no earthly
 Antidote can quench its raging fury.

[3.]

Oh, that a polar ocean, with its
Waters fresh from Lapland's frozen zone,
Might lave this bursting brow, and cool the
Raging of this fierce volcano. My heart!
It breaks! it breaks! Its fibres part asunder!
'Tis torn in pieces! Oh, the agony of this most
Desolate hour! Oh, the bitterness of this
Farewell pang. Come death! thou fell destroyer
Of our race, come, end my wo, and with thy iron
Hand, destroy in utter wreck this broken,
This distracted heart!

Enter LEON, with a bouquet, L.

Leon. Well, my fair mistress, accept this
Beauteous nosegay. It was culled, this very eve,
From the blooming bed of roses, planted by
Your own fair hands, when last you
Visited the castle.

Lau. I accept it, Leon,
With my thanks. But I pray you leave me.
I am not now in th' mood for further
Converse.

(Exit, LEON, R.)

(Examining the roses.) Ah, what a strong
Remembrancer is this? What a potent emblem
Of the heavenly innocence of these once happy scenes!
What a memento of the peaceful joys,
The unclouded hopes of my bright girlhood's years!
I do remember well the day I planted that rose-bed.
I was happy then! Yes, I was happy then!
My heart was cheerful as the warbling
Nightingale. Then all things wore a beauteous
Hue, of rosy hope and loveliness.
Alas! ye days of youthful joy! Ye are all fled
For ever! How has the brightness of my
Youthful being changed to horrid gloom and sadness!
How have my air-built bowers of bliss all fled
Like morning clouds away! Ye azure dreams
Of future joy! Ye mystic hopes of wedded love!
I bid ye all farewell, for ever! Never shall
I feel again the rapture of bright hope! Now
All is cheerless gloom!

Who would have e'er expected it?
 What crime have I committed; whom have I
 Wronged, that I should thus be singled out,
 The victim of fate's cruel, bitter hate?
 For it has ever been my joy to heal the sorrowing
 Heart, and wipe away the mourner's tear.
 But now I am myself the mourner, whose heavy
 Grief exceeds the sum of human wretchedness.
 Where can I look for peace? Or who will soothe
 My wo? (*Holds up and kisses a crucifix.*)
 Oh! Holy Virgin! pure and spotless emblem
 Of heavenly love and pity, whose ears are ever
 Open to the cries of the grief-burdened soul,
 Impart to me that consolation which this earth
 Can ne'er bestow! For the merits of thy
 Glorious Son, the prince of paradise, speak joy
 To this most desolate heart!

*Enter DON ALFONSO and PEDRO, R. S. E. They regard
 LAURA with interest and in silence.*

Lau. (solus.) Could I but now be near him,
 Whom I do love, so blindly but so well; could I
 But hear his voice, and hold sweet converse with
 Him, though he be another's, I might at least
 Endure the gloomy burden of existence.
 For he might utter words of sympathy,—nay,
 Even accents of repentance. (*pauses in thought.*)
 Yes! I will do it. I will see him. But then,
 My pride rebels against the journey.
 Shall I, the daughter of the proudest house
 In Spain, so far forget the dignity which still
 Is due my kindred, as well as to myself,
 As thus to cross the treacherous ocean,
 And go a wanderer forth, a suppliant,
 To a foreign clime, to feed upon the hollow
 Smiles of him who has deceived, deserted me,
 And who may e'en again repulse me? (*pauses.*)
 And yet, I shall but *perish* here!
 I look around me, and naught gives me
 Pleasure. These well-remembered scenes,
 The ancient castle of my brave forefathers,

The leafy forest, and the breezy lawn,
 The shady grotto, and the murmuring rivulet,
 All are most cheerless and repulsive now. **E'en my**
 Little spaniel tries all its well-accustomed
 Tricks in vain ; it fails to soothe me, as in
 Other, happier days !

Pedro. (to DON ALFONSO, aside.)

Her wounded heart will utter sounds of
 Plaintive wo, just like a broken harp, left as
 Useless wreck upon some lonely and deserted
 Shore ; whose trembling strings do sigh and
 Moan discordantly, in every passing wind.

(LAURA starts up at perceiving them.)

Lau. Ah ! my father, brother !

Are you here ?

Alf. We have unexpectedly been
 The witnesses of your grief.

Ped. If thou art still afflicted with the
 Perfidy of men ; if thou art sickened
 At the vanity of earth, then seek the calm
 And holy silence of the convent ; and there,
 Shut out from every mortal care, forgetful
 Of the miseries and the illusions of the
 World, in sacred converse with kind heaven
 And its blest inhabitants, thou mayest
 Find peace.

Lau. My brother, *I cannot !*

To me the gloomy silence of the cloister would be
 Intolerable. Within its still recesses,
 The tortured, jaundiced mind, deprived
 Of all external themes whereon to waste
 Its morbid energies, would then turn inward
 On itself ; with vulture cruelty, would feed
 On its own quivering vitals ; and picture
 Forth the horrors of its woes with more intense
 And fearful vividness. 'Twould be a living
 Death ; a human hell ! *I cannot !*

Ped. You doubtless think so now.
 But this perverted feeling soon would pass away.
 Others have found a heavenly balm for
 The same woes, in the same holy remedy.

Lau. I know it is impossible !

No; I will not make the vain attempt.
But with my father's kind permission,
(And I am well assured, his generous heart
Denies me nothing,) I will visit England;
Will see my truant lover once again;
And if I could dwell near him for a time, I feel
I may be happy yet. I cannot tear his image
From my breast. I have already made
The vain attempt, and oft renewed the struggle
O'er again; I might as well presume with
This weak arm, to pluck the towering Alps
From their eternal beds, as banish from
My breast the memory and the love of him,
To whom my heart's affections have been
Given. No! Let me go, my generous father;
Do, I beseech you. Let me see him once
Again.

Alf. I would do anything
For her I deeply love. And we will speak again
Of this hereafter. But see! the evening star
Now twinkles o'er the rugged brow of yonder
Western mountain. Night hastens on apace.
Please you retire to your chamber,
And take your wonted rest.

Lau. I will obey your wishes. *(Exit, Laura, L.)*

Alf. What think you, Pedro,
Of this proposition?

Ped. Strange and startling vagaries,
Do often mark the sore diseased mind.
Her wrongs have almost crazed her.

(pauses in meditation.)

Alf. Well, what say you?

Ped. I am in favor of her proposition.

Alf. For what reason?

Ped. The journey may dispel her
Sadness. But I have still a deeper purpose.
I have sworn before the sight of heaven, that
I will avenge her crying wrongs, and I will
Do it. Let us accompany her. Our
Present leisure renders it convenient.
My seeming pretext will be to protect
Her, and promote her wishes. But my real

Purpose shall be, to plunge this dagger deep
 Into her base deceiver's heart. If I perish
 In the execution, it is well. You can then
 Conduct her, her wrongs avenged, her honor
 Vindicated, to her paternal home again.

Alf. I will think of it.
 It may be so.

SCENE V.—*Palace of DON LORENZO.*

Enter LAURA, L.

Lau. (solus.) Yes, e'en the distant and uncertain thought
 Of seeing him I love, fills me again
 With hope, and hope to me is life and endless joy.
 Oh, love! how most mysterious and absolute
 Is thy power! Thy golden chain, unseen,
 Extends o'er distant lands and oceans,
 And binds as one in rapture or in wo,
 Hearts as distant
 As the poles asunder.

Enter LEON, L.

Leon. Madam, a visitor
 Requests admittance to your presence.

Lau. Bid him enter. *[Exit Leon, s.]*
 I shall at least behold him, hear him,
 Speak to him again. And that at least is
 Something!

Enter LORENZO, L.

Lor. My fairest Laura,
 I crave your pardon for my rude intrusion.

Lau. There is no pardon needed;
 You are welcome.

Lor. You have confided to your friend, my
 Sister, Constanza, the secret of your
 Deep distress, and she has ventured
 To appoint me partner of her trust.
 You have been basely, foully wronged.
 I would ne'er have wronged you thus!

Lau. You presume, sir, far
Too much upon my confidence.

Lor. Nay, forgive me.
For though I have been once repulsed,
And though I know the nature of your wrong,
I still possess the same regard, the same
Deep love for you. Then let me make, once more,
The offer of this rejected heart and hand.
Will you not now be mine? I forgive my
First repulse. Your second marriage
Will remove the ills inflicted by the first.

Lau. Sir, you little understand
My nature, or my present feelings.

Lor. But can you not be won
By the long devotion of true love?

Lau. Learn, sir, that when
The heart of a true woman has once been
Touched with love, no arts, no sedulous
Attentions, nor gentle wooings can e'er
Seduce her from her first allegiance.

Lor. But this English courtier has
Deceived you. He is most unworthy of such love
As this.

Lau. Your arguments are useless.
A woman's heart, once captured, tho' by
A faithless enemy, is no longer free;
And it remains a willing captive still!

Lor. 'Tis strange philosophy- I
Understand it not. But let us both forget
The past. Receive me now as your accepted suitor,
As your husband!

Lau. Sir, it is impossible.
I would not cheat you with the worthless gift
Of a mere hand, without
A heart; and this devoted heart, though it has been
Deceived, would never, if it could, throw off the
Sweet allegiance of its first eternal lord.

Lor. Then you refuse again?

Lau. You may understand it so.

Lor. Then, madam, you shall
Repent it. I will publish your disgrace
Throughout Madrid. Its proudest palace

And its most humble hovel, all shall echo
With the jeering clamor of your infamy.
E'en the crowded amphitheatre, where once you
Reigned the queen of beauty, at your future
Presence shall resound with groans and hisses.

Lau. Sir, leave my presence !
If you are base enough t' insult misfortune
You are unworthy of my notice.
I despise your dispicable threats.
My conscious innocence and purity
Allow me to defy your brutal malice,
And treat your vengeance with contempt.
Leave my presence, sir !

Lor. I swear to execute my threat. (*Exit Lorenzo, L.*)

Lau. Thus does misfortune ever
Hasten on misfortune, and wrong accumulate
On wrong. Let once the wheel of the blind
Goddess turn, and let the worthiest of mankind
Descend, then do the vilest hasten to oppress
The hapless victim, with their base and
Despicable censure. Oh, conscious innocence !
Thou art thine own reward, and it is all
Thou hast to boast of !

Re-enter LORENZO, L.

Lor. Fairest Laura, my deathless passion
For thy charms o'ercomes my struggling hate.
Once more, I pray you, listen to my earnest
Suit, and grant it. Come ! My carriage now, is
Waiting at the garden gate. Let us fly through
The hanging foliage. I swear to you
Eternal love and constancy.

Lau. Sir, leave me, I again insist upon
It. I abhor your importunities.

Lor. Nay, I will not be denied.
Come with me. Let us hasten hence. (*seizes her.*)

Lau. Oh, whither shall I look
For refuge ? My father, brother, help ! help !

Enter PEDRO, L. S. E.

Ped. What means this

Strange alarm, this horrid violence?
Lorenzo, have you indeed become the
Despicable villain that you seem?

Lau. He would compel me, by
Foul rudeness, a dishonored fugitive,
To fly with him. Save me from him!

Lor. Thou hast come to intercept her
From my arms. I swear, this double
Insult shall be atoned, ere long, by
Double vengeance.

Ped. Die, thou malicious villain!

(They fight, and Lorenzo falls.)

In hell thou mayest execute thy basely
Threatened vengeance on the innocent,
The unfortunate. Die! *(again stabbing him.)*
And descend to where thy kindred devils
Dwell. They may assist thee in thy
Hellish work.

Lor. I know her heart is broken;
That is revenge enough! *(dies.)*

Ped. My injured Laura:
The punishment of those who wronged thee,
Has been begun already.

Lau. Here, I beseech you,
Let your vengeance *end* for ever.

SCENE VI.—*Audience Chamber of PHILIP II. The King
with several courtiers and officers discovered.*

K. Phil. (to Offi.) Summon Don Pedro to our presence
Instantly.

(Exit Officer, R.)

The wonton murder of a Spanish grandee,
Without just cause or provocation, cannot
Be permitted, not even to the highest noble
In the land. I must inquire of this
Sad deed.

*Enter PEDRO, LAURA, and ALFONSO, preceded by an
Officer.*

Don Pedro, you have been charged with
Th' murder of Lorenzo. How is this?

Have you thus stained your honored sword
With innocent blood ?

Ped. Sire, I did the deed
To vindicate that outraged honor.
The dead Lorenzo thus presuming on the
Ancient friendship of our houses, as well
As the deep injury inflicted on
My sister, by another, now beyond the
Reach of justice, pressed his suit with
Boldness ; nay, with insult. And when his
Hated alliance was declined, he would have
Added force and brutal violence to his suit.
My injured sister did implore deliverance.
I heard her suppliant cries. I came to
Her relief, just at the instant of her
Greatest peril, and I rescued her by slaying
Her most dastardly assailant. This, my liege,
Was the occasion of the deed.

K. Phil. You have a fair and a sufficient
Witness here, who may confirm, or may deny
The truth of your defense. Speak, lady !

Lau. My liege, 'tis true,
As my brother hath declared. Even
To the last syllable 'tis true. To his
Avenging sword, I owe my honor, and
My safety.

K. Phil. It is enough, fair lady.
Don Pedro, thou art free ; acquitted of the
Charge, which had thus reached my ears.
Stern justice does commend thy deed. But thou
Speak'st of a great wrong which thy sister
Had endured from one now far beyond the
Arm of justice. What does that mean ?

Ped. My liege, one of the noble
Cavaliers, who late bore message from the
King of England to this court, wooed and won
My sister for his bride. After their secret.
Though honorable nuptials, he declared
That he was already wed, and left her
In her tears and desolation.

K. Phil. Infamous deceiver !

Ped. And what is stranger still,

Her widowed heart can find no rest.
The knowledge of her wrong cannot release
Her spirit from the tender chain which bound
Her to the beloved form of her deceiver.
And now she asks to travel where he dwells,
'That she may there, at least, be near him.
She thinks 'twould soothe her anguish.

K. Phil. 'Tis very strange. And yet—
'Tis not strange! The undying constancy
Of woman's love, I know full well. And I'm not
Amazed at this unequalled tenderness.

Ped. Does my liege approve
Of her strange purpose?

K. Phil. I do. Let me fulfil
Her heart's desire. Let her go to England in such
State of splendor as befits her noble
Rank and lineage.

Ped. While I accede to her
Request, it would afford me opportunity
To punish the guilty culprit.

K. Phil. That I also will approve.
And that you may possess complete impunity
To execute your righteous purpose;
I will entrust you with despatches
To the English court, touching the marriage
Of the Infanta. You shall go thither
As my ambassador, and receive all
The high honors due to the representative
Of the ancient crown of Spain.

Lau. And yet, my sovereign,
He shall not execute his uttered threat
Of vengeance. I had rather that the sword,
Now reeking with the wonton blood of dead
Lorenzo, should in dishonor perish,
Than that it should be foully stained
With the blood of him whose love I cherish
Better far than life itself. I will prevent
A deed so base in him, so sad to me.

K. Phil. Let that be as
You wish. I will perform my promise
To him. Make your preparations instantly
To sail to England.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Cabinet in Windsor Palace.* KING JAMES
discovered reading a letter.

K. James. (solus.) This last despatch I've just received
From Spain, is more desponding than the
Rest. The Spanish king becomes more haughty,
The princess is more frivolous, and the
Ministers are more vexatious in their
Terms; while Buckingham, as is his wont,
Is most exacting and unyielding. I doubt not,
This expedition will entirely fail.

Enter PAGE, L.

Page. My liege, Prince Charles and the
Duke of Buckingham have just arrived from Spain.
Exit s. E.

Enter BUCKINGHAM and PRINCE CHARLES, L.

K. James. Welcome! welcome to your homes
And England. You are both doubly welcome!
Your arrival is unexpected, but it is
Not less agreeable.

Buck. Our resolution to return
Was sudden, resulting from the hopeless
Aspect of the negotiations concerning the
Infanta. These do I bear to you, from the King of Spain
(*Gives despatches and casket to the king.*)

K. James. I prejudged that such would be
The fruitless end of your endeavors, from the news
I last received from you.

Charles. I assure your majesty
'Tis not the Infanta's fault, that she regrets
To-day, the absence of a husband.
The blame is theirs, whose hearts and feelings

Were not enlisted in the affair.

K. James. Where'er the fault may rest,
I am content. I embrace my son once
More, secure, unharmed, amid ten thousand
Perils. That is most valued of all good
Fortune; while most intense have been my thoughts of
Fear and dread, lest accident, or death might
Be the issue, and the penalty of this most
Strange and silly expedition.

Buck. My liege, although your son
Did not obtain the Infanta's hand, yet his late
Journey has been useful to him. I will
Vouch for it, that he's much wiser now
Than when he started forth from England.
He has made observations large and deep,
Of men, of laws, of nature, and of women,
Which will vastly profit him, whenever
He assumes the heavy weight which rests
Upon a monarch's shoulders.

K. James. I am much pleased to hear it
For all this, I must reward yourself,
Most noble Duke. Continue to be first
In my high confidence. Anon, we will
Look elsewhere for a princess for my son.
I have just received a friendly greeting
From the King of France, who offers me
An alliance with his noble house.

Buck. It may be well t' accept it.
But with your majesty's permission, we
Will now retire, and recruit our wasted strength,
After all the great fatigues of our long journey.

K. James. I permit you; go!

SCENE II.—*Palace of Sir William Sidney. A splendid
Portrait hangs in a conspicuous position. SIDNEY
(dressed in mourning,) intently gazing on the picture.*

Sid. (solus.) That is the truthful and expressive image
Of my loving, injured, and confiding Laura,
Drawn by the master hand of the greatest
Limner in all Spain. Just so her dark eye
Beamed on me with rapturous passion,

When first I called her mine, and pressed her
To my throbbing heart, amid the fragrant
Bowers of her once happy home.
There, too, is her serene and noble brow,
Her queen-like neck, her fascinating smile ;
All speaking forth the generous, confiding,
Loving, and impassioned woman.
And that angelic form, alas ! how
Have I seen it racked with keenest agony,
At the announcement of my own perfidious
Baseness ; baseness indeed without a parallel.
Oh, memory ! memory ! thou deadly
Scorpion of the guilty mind, would that
I could blunt thy poisonous sting ! In the
Desolation which I feel, I may
Compute the wretchedness of her whom
I have deeply wronged. Would that my own
Afflicted heart might now commune with
Hers, in sympathy of grief. Oh, could I
Hear her tender voice, but utter accents of
Forgiveness, 'twould be indeed a heavenly
Consolation ! But that can never be !
E'en now she mourns alone in her own distant land.

Enter SERVANT, L.

Serv. A nobleman has just arrived,
And asks to be admitted to your presence.

Sid. Show him in without delay. (*Exit Servant.*)
Who can this stranger be, who thus
Intrudes upon my decorous seclusion ?

Enter DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM, L.

Buck. Ah ! my old friend Sidney,
I come to cheer you in your present tedious
Absence from the joyful world. I trust my
Presence is at least agreeable ?

Sid. Most assuredly, my lord, it is.
I am most pleased to see you.

Buck. We have passed together
Amid too many scenes of rich adventure,

At home, and o'er the seas, not to be agreeable
 Companions. By the way, and to direct your
 Gloomy thoughts, have you e'er heard
 What has become of that fair Andalusian,
 Whom you so completely victimized,
 In Madrid? Ha! that was well done!

(SIDNEY *appears shocked at the allusion.*)

Sid. My lord, jest not on such
 A theme. It is more tender to me than
 You may imagine. I pray you not to trifle
 With it. Speak of anything but that.

Buck. How is this? What mean you?
 You have indeed become most scrupulous
 And strangely crammed with conscience all at once!
 I am quite unprepared for this.

Sid. Sir, behold that portrait! (*points to portrait.*)
 'Tis the speaking image of
 The noblest of her sex, whom your most vile and
 Damned sophistry taught me to ruin
 And deceive. I am not yet the hardened
 Villain, to whom such deeds of infamy
 Are facile or accustomed. But misled
 By your unjust philosophy, I yielded to
 An evil genius, and was guilty of a wrong,
 Which, I fear, not the remorse and
 Deep regret of coming years can e'er atone.

Buck. This is nonsense! Are you then
 So weak a mortal as to be affected by a
 Woman's tears? Know you not, that they have all
 A most obedient, briny-flood within them,
 Which issues forth at pleasure, on all
 Occasions? And I suppose that your deserted
 Spanish bride possessed the usual, artful,
 Melting trickeries of her sex, and used them on you.

Sid. My lord, you do outrage her
 Greatly. And you have been the guilty cause
 Of my own wrong. Your counsel to me
 Was most base; it was dishonorable!

Buck. Sir, I am not
 Used to language such as this. The king himself,
 Upon his throne, would
 Not presume to call me, or my deeds,

‘Dishonorable.’

Sid. Then I dare to call you so.
I repeat, that had it not been for your
Deceitful counsel, my own conscience had not
Now been burdened with the guilt of a most
Cruel and most vile imposture.

Buck. Well, sir, if such be your
Estimate of me and my principles, as we so
Greatly misunderstand each other, I will
End our thankless intercourse ; and
For the last time, I say to you, farewell.

(*Exit Buckingham, R.*)

Sid. (solus.) He is gone ! Would to heaven that
I ne’er had known him. From what a deep,
Corroding canker had I been free, which
Now does gnaw my vitals, as if I were a
New Prometheus, rockbound, high amid
The raging elements, suffering the vulture
Vengeance of the angry gods !
But hold ! A thought now strikes my fevered brain !
Peace and repentance come by reparation.
Yes, happy thought ! I yet may comfort her
Afflicted heart. The pretext serves me well.
Yes, I will do it. I will give it out,
That, to dispel my sadness,—the true cause
Whereof is hid from all the world,— I will
Set forth upon my travels ; and then, with lightning
Quickness will I speed my way to her beloved abode,
And the same scenes which once beheld her
Raptures and her wrongs, shall witness also
My repentance, and her sudden joy.
Oh ! ’tis a precious thought, nor would I fail in
Its fulfilment, for all the treasures of the world.

Enter SERVANT, L.

Serv. My lord, a splendid equipage
Has just advanced within the courtyard gates.

Sid. See them conducted
To the great saloon, I will myself wait
On them there immediately. (*Exit Servant.*)
This is doubtless some kind members of our

Kindred, who would offer me, according
 To established, courteous custom, their friendly
 Sympathy. Did they but know my heart's
 True anguish, how vain, how worthless
 Would their kindness seem, e'en
 To themselves! Oh! my injured, loving Laura,
 Worlds would I give, this hour, to press thee
 Now in these unworthy arms!

SCENE III.—*Palace of Sir William Sidney. LAURA, DON PEDRO, and DON ALFONSO discovered. On SIDNEY'S entrance they rise.*

Enter Sir Sidney, L. (At sight of LAURA he is startled and overcome for some moments with the utmost astonishment.)

Lau. My lord, do you not know me?

Sid. Is this real?

Or am I in a dream? I am amazed!
 Can this be Laura, the noble Spanish
 Lady, whom I knew in her own land?

Lau. It is the same, my lord.

My brother here, has come as bearer of
 Despatches to the King of England, and I
 Have thus embraced the opportunity
 To accompany him.

Sid. I greet you all most
 Heartily. You are most welcome.

Lau. Oh, Sir William! how have
 I wished to see this hour! Your absence long
 Has filled my heart with deepest sadness.
 I can never, never forget the past,
 And I have visited this distant clime to see
 You once again, and to dwell near you for
 A time, in hope that converse with you
 Might assuage my anguish; give me
 Joy and peace again; and then, alas!
 To say farewell, for ever!

*(ALFONSO and PEDRO retire to rear and converse
 in dumb show.)*

Sid. Noble woman!

I bless the god-like love and constancy,
Which have impelled you to this step.
I am, indeed, unworthy of such divine devotion.
Ye titled sovereigns of a hundred realms,
Who count you own the treasure of a world,
Ye are not half so rich as I, the happy
Owner of a heart, so fond, so changeless,
And so true! You are thrice welcome,
And let me clasp unto my breast again
That angel form which once was mine,
In joys beyond the tongue of man. (*they embrace.*)
Thou art still as beautiful as ever!
Still hast thou yet the same sweet smile,
The same fond, loving, trusting heart! Oh, how
Often have I thought of thee, as thus thou
Beamest in immortal beauty, when
Coursing o'er the pathless deep; when sighing
'Mid the glittering throng of rank and pride;
In the midst of high yet heartless revelry;
And the midnight hour of silent thought
And sadness.

Lau. Hast thou, then, indeed,
Remembered me? Alas, I feared my
Very name had long been buried by thee in oblivion.
Oh! how has my sad spirit cherished thy
Beloved memory!

Sid. Canst thou forgive
The crying wrong I did thee? Oh, I have
Sinned against thee too deeply to be forgiven.

Lau. I have forgiven thee! Yes,
And I do still forgive thee, freely. I know
That thou wert led astray by the fierce
Madness of thy passion. I forgive thee!
And I love thee still!

Sid. Oh, thou God of Justice!
I thank thee, that thou dost give this
Proffered opportunity of reparation.
Know then, thou model of thy sex,
Thou sum of every virtue, and every
Loveliness; know that I may yet redeem
My tarnished honor; and that thy trusting
Heart, which I once wronged, may now

Be pillowed in eternal joy, upon another,
As free, as faithful, as devoted as
Thine own.

Lau. What mean you?

That were, indeed, an extacy of bliss I ne'er
Expected 'mid all my brightest reveries.

Sid. Hear me: Since last I left thee,
Sorrowing and deserted, in thy home,
I myself have been bereaved by Providence.
The wedded partner of my life has been
Removed from earth, and now she slumbers in
Her grave. I may now give thee that same
Heart and hand which once I falsely plighted
To thee, in thy home, now free, and freely
And for ever thine. Wilt thou accept
The unworthy offering?

Lau. Will I accept thee? (*rushes up and embraces him.*)
Yes. Thou art far more precious to me
Than a princely diadem!

Sid. This very day,
Despite all usual forms of decorous delay,
I will conduct thee to the bridal altar.
Thy matchless beauty heightened by thy tears;
And there thou shalt receive a heart
Softened by repentance for the past,
And filled with new-born rapture, at
The advent of this propitious hour.

(*ALFONSO and PEDRO come forward.* ALF. L. & PED. R.)
Will these, our noble friends, my honored
Guests, approve our purpose?

Alf. Thou hast won her love,
And she is thine.

Ped. Thou hast possession of
Her heart; justice demands her hand should
Follow it.

Sid. Oh, then, let Lethe's silent waters
Wash away, in deep oblivion, all the
Sad'ning memories of the past. From this
Sweet hour let life begin anew.

Lau. Ah, my love, let us not
Forget the past. Its mingled scenes of
Rapture and of wo, will make our future

Bliss more lasting and intense.

Sid. Oh ! the unequalled
Constancy of woman's love ! Time may revolve
Its ever-changing rounds. Empires and kingdoms
May ascend to grandeur, and may crumble
To their native dust again. The power
Of high and stern ambition may dissolve
Away. The eager hand of avarice
May loose its iron grasp. All human passions
May grow faint and weak. But woman's love,
If it be genuine love, once rooted in the breast,
Remains as quenchless and immortal
As the undying essence of the soul !

THE END.

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